

# Led by The Holy Spirit

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## The Lord's Lamp

Romans 8:8-18

Those *controlled by the sinful nature* cannot please God—those who are living the life of the flesh—catering to the appetites and impulses of their carnal nature—cannot please or satisfy God, or be acceptable to Him.

You, however, are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you—if he directs and controls you—you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him . . . And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ—anyone who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about . . .

Reverse that, read: “**If** the Spirit of God lives in you—**if** he directs and controls you . . . you are not (will not be; can not be) controlled by the sinful nature.

How can that be? Real simple, if the Spirit of God is in control—then you are not in control.

I have continually taught and shouted from the rooftops that when you surrender your life to Jesus—there is a new-birth—the very life and nature of God takes residence in you—old things pass away—a new life enters into your being and you are no longer a slave to your body; as Paul writes, “If the Spirit of God lives in you, you are not controlled by the sinful nature—but by the spirit . . .” That is a message of victory!

Notice something in verse 9, again. Paul wrote, “*You are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit . . .*” And you are standing there thinking, “Oh, really? I feel like I'm controlled by the sinful nature . . .” Well, read verse 9 again . . . Paul said, “*You are not controlled . . . IF . . .*” *if* is a conditional clause . . . You are not controlled—**IF**—the Spirit of God lives in you *and IF* he directs and controls you. As long as you insist in controlling your own life, you will be controlled by the sinful nature . . .

*“ . . . if Christ lives in you, then although your natural body is dead by reason of sin and guilt—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—your spirit is alive because of the righteousness that He imputes to you—you experience life on God's terms . . . (Romans 8:9-11)*

Get that? Despite the fact that you still live in this physical body and exist in the physical world, you are not a slave to it any more . . . you can be if you choose to . . . you can live with a voluntary servitude to your carnal nature if you wish . . .

*And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also restore to life your mortal—short-lived, perishable bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you—it stands to reason that if the alive-and-present God who raised*

*Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? —When God lives and breathes in you, you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's! (Romans 8:11 MSG)*

Becoming a Christian means a radical transformation. It affects your words, motivations, conduct, the type of people you associate with. True Christianity is more than a verbal explanation of life. It is a way of life. A twenty-four-hour-a-day, demanding, challenging, courageous way of life.

When you became a Christian, God did something to that old life of yours. He cut you off from that life in Adam. You are no longer joined to fallen Adam, but you are joined to a risen Christ, and your life is now linked with him. *Now* he is able to express his life *through* you in the same natural way as Adam once expressed his life through you.

It is as easy to live with the life of Christ, as it was to live with the life of Adam. It is just as natural for you now, and can be done without struggle. YOU HAVE THE VERY LIFE AND NATURE OF GOD LIVING ON THE INSIDE OF YOU!

It might take awhile to learn to put it into practice . . . you may struggle with it at times. But eventually you need to take hold of what Paul is talking about—when you do, you will discover that where once sin reigned over you, Christ is now reigning over you. Right now, in this life, you can experience victory in Christ where before you experienced only defeat in Adam.

*Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it—we are not obligated to our carnal nature—[Read that sentence again—we are not obligated to our carnal nature . . . quit showing allegiance to your carnal nature!]—a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates of the flesh—we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent . . .*

*There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all—For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; **but** [BUT! I love that word! When it is used as a conjunction, it introduces something in contrast. “this was true, but now this is true!”] if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; **BUT**—if through the power of the Holy Spirit you are habitually putting to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live—the best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life, (Romans 8:11-13)*

— Quit justifying your weaknesses and move into victory with the power of God that lives within you!

*“. . . 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, but you received the Spirit of Son-ship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’—this*

resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike 'What's next, Papa?'

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children—God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are—we know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children!

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

"those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God . . . The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children—God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are—we know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children!" (Romans 8:14-17)

- "those who are led by the Spirit of God . . ." We can expect to be led by the Holy Spirit!

Proverbs 20:27

*The spirit of a man—that factor in human personality which proceeds immediately from God—is the lamp—the searchlight—the light bulb—of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts.*

- God will enlighten us, he will guide us, through our spirits!
- Many times, however, we seek guidance by means other than the way God said. When we do, we get into trouble.
  - We sometimes judge how God is leading us by what our physical senses tell us—the bible doesn't say the *body* of man is the candle of the Lord . . . nor does it say the *mind* of man is the candle of the Lord. It says that the *spirit* of man is the candle of the Lord.
  - He guides and enlightens us through our spirits.
- Before we can understand how God leads us and guides us through our spirits, we have to understand the nature of man—that man is a spirit—that he possesses a soul—and lives in a physical body . . .

## Man: An Eternal Spirit

Genesis 1:26-27:

God said, “Let Us—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—make mankind *in Our image—reflecting our nature—after Our likeness* and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame beasts, and over all of the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth.”

- Man is a spirit being. He is made in the image of God—he reflects the nature of God. Jesus said, in John 4:24, that God is Spirit, so man must of a necessity be a spirit.

“. . . may your whole *spirit, soul and body* be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .” (I Thessalonians 5:23)

- When the physical body of man is dead and in the grave, the spirit lives on.

- Paul spoke of physical death when he wrote,

“. . . I am hard pressed between the two. My yearning desire is to depart (to be free of this world, to set forth) and be with Christ, for that is far, far better; But to remain in my body is more needful and essential for your sake” (Philippians 1:23-24).

- Paul is going to live, whether in the body or out of the body . . .

- Paul was talking about the inward man, the spirit of man, who lives inside the body.

- Think of the body as your *earthsuit*. When astronauts leave our atmosphere, they need a *spacesuit*. The spacesuit allows them to exist and connect with a different environment. Your physical body also allows you—the real you—to connect with a different environment: the environment of a three-dimensional, carbon-based world.

“. . . though outwardly we are wasting away—though our outer man is progressively decaying and wasting away—dying, our inner self—our spirits—inwardly we are being progressively being renewed day after day—not a day goes by without his unfolding grace . . .” (II Corinthians 4:16)

- There is obviously an *inward* man, and an *outward* man. The *outward* man is the house in which you live.

- that inward man never grows older—he is renewed every day—he is a spirit-man.

- Go back to our beginning texts. Romans 8:14 says, “. . . *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*”
  - “The Spirit (Himself) testifies—bears witness—confirms that we are the children of God . . .”
  - The Spirit of God bears witness *with the spirit of man.*
  - Proverbs 20:27 says, “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord . . .”
- What is our spirit?

Jesus told Nicodemus that “unless a person is *born again—*anew, *from above*—he cannot see or know and experience the kingdom of God?” (John 3:3).

Nicodemus had no idea what Jesus was talking about. We’ve heard that phrase over and over—Nicodemus on the other hand, was only thinking of a natural birth. So he asked Jesus,

“How in the world can anyone be “*born*” who is already born and grown up? You can’t re-enter your mother’s womb and be born again. What are you saying with this ‘born-from-above’ talk?”

Jesus answered Nicodemus, “You’re not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation—the ‘*wind hovering over the water*’ creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life—it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom. When you look at a baby, it’s just that: a body you can look at and touch. But the person who takes shape within is formed by something you can’t see and touch—the Spirit—and becomes a living spirit.

“So don’t be so surprised when I tell you that you have to be ‘*born from above*’—out of this world, so to speak. You know how the wind blows this way and that. You hear it rustling through the trees, but you have no idea where it comes from or where it’s headed next. That’s the way it is with everyone ‘*born from above*’ by the wind of God, the Spirit of God.” (John 3:6-7 *The Message*). That which is *born of the spirit, is spirit* . . . (NKJV).

- Jesus was not talking about a physical birth, rather of a spiritual birth.
  - It is the spirit of man that is born-again. His spirit receives Eternal Life—Zoë—the life and nature of God.
  - Paul: “*the inward man.*”
  - Peter: “*hidden man of the heart* . . .”

“. . . let it be the inward adorning and beauty of the *hidden person of the heart*, with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful

spirit, which is not anxious or wrought up, but is very precious in the sight of God . . .” (I Peter 3:4)

- When the Bible speaks of the *heart*, it is speaking of the *spirit*. Wherever the word *heart* is used, substitute the word *spirit* and you will get a clearer picture of what it is talking about.

What this means is that if any person is engrafted in Christ the Messiah— if they become Christians—*they are a new creation—a new creature altogether*—the old previous moral and *spiritual condition* has passed away—that old life is gone. A fresh and new life has come! (II Corinthians 5:17)

- This is talking about the inward man. You do not get a new body. I realize many of wish this were not true, but the outward man remains the same. If you were bald before you were born again, you are still bald afterwards. If you had brown eyes before, you still have brown eyes.
- God does not do anything with the outward man—*You* have to do something with the outward man. That outward man is your responsibility.

## Conscious of Your Spirit

I Thessalonians 5:23:

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you—separate you from profane things, make you pure and wholly consecrated to God—through and through. May your whole *spirit, soul and body* be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

- Paul begins with the inside, the innermost part of man, the heart of his being, which is his spirit, and comes to the outside.
  - Many misquote this passage by saying, “body, soul and spirit . . .”
  - We are more body-conscious than spirit-conscious.
  - Natural things mean more to us than spiritual things. They are obviously more visible, easier to contact, we live with it daily . . . so we put physical first.
  - We need to be *spirit-conscious*.
  - Spiritual things will become more real to us the more *spirit-conscious* we become.
  - If we are going to be led by the Spirit of God (since we know that God’s Spirit leads us through our spirits) we must become more *spirit-conscious* or we will miss out on the whole thing.

### —What is the Difference Between Spirit and Soul?

For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power—making it active, operative, energizing, and effective—it is sharper than any two-edged sword, *penetrating to the dividing line of the soul and spirit*, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

- The spirit and the soul are not the same.
  - Paul wrote that they can be divided by the Word of God.
  - If you can divide them, they cannot be the same . . .
  - Only the Word of God is capable of dividing the two, however.
- Think of it this way: With your body you contact the physical realm. (That goes without argument).
  - With your spirit you contact the spiritual realm.
- The only other part of you left was the soul.
  - With the soul you contact the intellectual and emotional realm.
  - Here is a passage that may help:

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, *my spirit* prays, but my *mind* is unproductive—my *understanding* is unfruitful—it lies fallow . . . If I pray

in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying.  
—I Corinthians 14:14

- Our understanding, our natural human mentality, is a part of our soul.
  - Notice again what Paul wrote, “*My spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.*”
  - In effect, saying: “I am not praying out of my soul when I pray in tongues; I am praying out of my spirit, my heart, my innermost being.”
  
- Jesus said:

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow *from within* him—From his *innermost being* shall flow continuously springs and rivers of living water..” *By this he meant the Spirit*, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. —John 7:37-39
  
- Out of our *innermost being* will flow rivers of living water . . .
  - read again: “The *spirit* of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly—searching all his *innermost parts* . . . out of his Belly—out of his innermost being—will flow rivers of living water . . .
  
- All the leadings we will ever receive come from out of our spirit—and many will come while praying in other tongues.
  - Now you can understand why. Our spirit is active when we pray in tongues.
  
- One of the reasons we don't see victory in our lives is because we do so much of just one kind of praying—praying with the understanding—mental prayer.
  - We try to fight spiritual battles with mental abilities.
  
- During various crises in my life, I have learned to look to my spirit inside me.
  - I pray in other tongues. While I am praying in other tongues, I often receive the guidance I need for that particular crisis—it just seems to rise up within me
  - This is because my spirit is active—and my mind (my soul) is quiet.
  
- It is through my spirit that God is going to guide me.
  - Most of the time, while I am praying in tongues, from somewhere way down inside, I can sense something rise up in me. I cannot tell anybody *how* I know it, because my understanding has nothing to do with it. But I know on the inside of me what to do. I follow that. I listen to my spirit. Because the spirit of man is the candle—the lamp—of the Lord.

## Saving the Soul

James 1:21

So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the message God has planted in your hearts—let God, the gardener of you life, *landscape you with the Word*, making a salvation-garden of your life—the Word implanted and rooted in your hearts contains the power to *save your souls* . . . it is indeed strong enough to save your souls . .

- What a neat passage and imagery! I love the idea that God’s Word will *landscape* me. God’s word will embellish—add details or make more appealing.
- We know, already, that the spirit of man is the part that is born again—However, the saving of the soul is a process.
  - Many people use the words spirit and soul interchangeably.
- James was not writing to unbelievers, but rather to the Church

“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the *elders of the church* . . .”

- in other words, is there any sick among the *Church*, let him call for the elders of the *Church*.
- Look at verse 18:

In his goodness he chose to make us *his own children* by giving us his true word—and is showing us off as *the crown of all his creatures*—we, out of all creation, became *his choice possession*.

My dear brothers and sisters, lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue—in other words, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Your anger can never make things right in God’s sight—his righteousness does not grow from human anger.

So get rid of all the spoiled filth and cancerous evil in your lives—throw it in the garbage. In simple humility accept the message God has planted in your hearts, for it is strong enough to *save your souls*. —James 1:18-21  
NLT

- James is talking to born-again believers—followers of Christ.
- He calls them, “*my beloved brothers* . . .”
- They were in Christ, yet he encourages these born-again, spirit-filled people to receive the engrafted Word with humility, “*which is able to save your souls* . . .” Evidently, their souls were not saved.

- Okay, we established that a man’s spirit, the innermost man, the real man, receives Eternal Life and is born-again—recreated. But his *intellect and emotions*—which compose his soul—still have to be dealt with. They are not born-again. They are to be renewed.

- Paul wrote to the Romans Christians about renewing of the mind:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world—don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world—becoming so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God—be transformed by the *renewing of your mind*. Let its *new ideals* and its *new attitudes* rule you—so that you may prove for yourselves what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the things which is good and acceptable and perfect in His sight for you. (Romans 12:2)

- As your mind is renewed—you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is
- You’ll be changed from the inside out and will readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

- God does not *restore* our spirits. Our spirits become brand new creations in Christ Jesus.

- Our souls, however, can be renewed and restored. How? Well the Bible says:

“receive with humility the engrafted word, which is able to *renew your souls* . . .

“don’t be conformed to this world; instead be transformed by the *renewing of your mind*, so you can prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God . . .”

- Man’s soul is restored when his mind becomes renewed with the Word of God.
- It is the Word of God that renews our souls, our minds.
- We begin to think in line with what God’s Word says.
- We are able to know and prove the permissive and perfect will of God—because the Word of God is the will of God.
- We don’t have so many questions about the will of God when we get our souls renewed.

- As you renew your mind with God’s Word we have the mind of Christ!

For who has known or understood the mind—the counsels and purposes of the Lord, so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? *But we have the mind of Christ* and do hold the thoughts—the feelings and the purposes of His heart. —1 Corinthians 2:16 *Amplified Version*

“Who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who can give him counsel?”  
*But we can understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ. —I*  
Corinthians 2:16 *New Living Translation*

- What a powerful statement! “. . . *we can understand . . . for we have the mind of Christ . . .*” That is, if we renew our minds with the Word of God
- The greatest need of the Church today is our minds renewed with the Word of God.

## Presenting the Body

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to *offer your bodies*—make a decisive dedication of your bodies—presenting all your members and faculties—as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

- As we said, it is the inward man—not the outward man—that becomes a new creature in Christ.
- We still have the same body we had before we became a new creature.
- We must learn to let that new man on the inside of us dominate. Now, with that new man, we can control the flesh and do something with our bodies.

II Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is ingrafted in Christ, he is a new creation—a new creature altogether—a new self. The old previous moral and spiritual condition has passed away—the old has gone, the new has come!

- *We* need to crucify the flesh. This is **not** something God does for you. It is something you do for yourself.
  - “Therefore, I urge you, brothers,” Paul wrote the Roman Church, “in view of God's mercy, to *offer your bodies* . . .”
- Who offers your bodies? You do!
  - You present or offer your body.
  - If you don't do something with it, nothing will ever be done . . .

I Corinthians 9:27

I keep under my body and make it my slave—I'm staying alert and in top condition—I'm not going to get caught napping—like a boxer I buffet my body—discipline it by hardships and subdue it—like an athlete, training it to do what it should.

So that after I have preached to others—proclaiming the gospel and things pertaining to it—I end up missing out myself—disqualified for the prize—become unfit—not stand the test, be unapproved and rejected as a counterfeit.

- Paul is saying that he does something with his body—“I keep under my body” —“I bring it into subjection.”
- Instead of letting his body dominate the inward man, Paul saw to it that the inward man dominated the outward man.

**Notice this:** Here is the great Apostle—this Holy Man of God—This spiritual giant—yet evidently his body wanted to do things that were wrong.

- If it hadn't, he would not have to had to keep it under. He would not have had to bring it into subjection!
  
- Just because your body wants to do wrong, it doesn't mean you are not saved—or, that you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. You will have to contend with the body, the flesh, as long as you are here.
  - Yes, you will have problems with the flesh as long as you are in the flesh. But you have the *means*, the *ability*, and the *authority* to deal with the devil and to *deal with the flesh*.
  - You can do it! But most importantly, *you* are the one who must do it. Paul did not say God would do it for you. He did not say the Holy Spirit would do it for you. He said:
    - “*You* present your bodies . . .”
    - “You are not to conform to this world . . .”
    - “*You* be transformed by the *renewing of your mind* . . . “
    - You* present your body . . .
    - You* do it.
    - You* get your mind renewed with the Word of God, then you do it.
  
- The life and nature of God is inside of your spirit. Let that man on the inside be the dominate one. Listen to him. It is the spirit of man that is the candle of the Lord. It is through your spirit that God will guide you.

## Number One: The Inward Witness

Romans 8:16:

*“The Spirit (Himself) bears witness with our spirit . . .*

- This is the primary way that God leads us
- In the Old Testament, the prophets would say, *“The word of the Lord came to me, saying . . .”* How did it come to them?
  - It couldn’t have been audible.
  - If it had, everyone present would have heard it—he wouldn’t have had to tell them what the Spirit said.
- The Word of the Lord came to the prophet’s spirit from the Spirit of God. When this happens it is so real that it may seem audible at the time.

A perfect example of this is when the Lord called out to Samuel:

The boy Samuel was serving the Lord by assisting Eli. This was at a time when the revelation of God was rarely heard or seen. One night Eli was sound asleep (his eyesight was very bad—he could hardly see). It was well before dawn; the sanctuary lamp was still burning. Samuel was still in bed in the Temple of God, where the Chest of God rested. Suddenly, the Lord called out, “Samuel! Samuel!”

“Yes?” Samuel replied. “What is it?” He jumped up and ran to Eli. “I heard you call. Here I am. What do you need?”

“I didn’t call you,” Eli replied. “Go on back to bed.” So he did.

Then God called again, “Samuel!”

Again Samuel jumped up and ran to Eli. “I heard you call. Here I am. What do you need?”

Again Eli said, Son, I didn’t call you, my son, go on back to bed.”

(This all happened before Samuel knew God for himself. It was before the revelation of God had been given to him personally—he had never had a message from the Lord before).

So now the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel jumped up and ran to Eli. “I heard you call me. Here I am.”

That’s when it dawned on Eli that God was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, ‘Yes, Lord, your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went back to bed.

And the Lord came and called, exactly as before, “Samuel! Samuel!”

Samuel replied, “Yes, your servant is listening.”

Then the LORD said to Samuel . . . (1 Samuel 3: 1-11)

- Obviously the Lord’s voice was audible—and only to Samuel. It was so real, Samuel thought Eli was calling him.

- The prophet of the New Testament is similar in that, the prophet of the OT was called a *seer* because he saw and knew things supernaturally.
  - The prophet of the NT will also see and know things supernaturally. But the prophet of the NT does not have the same status as the prophet of the OT.
  - Jesus did not set prophets in the Church to guide the Church.
  - Christians—born-again believers—those living with the Spirit of Christ within do not *seek* guidance through prophets.
  - He might receive *guidance* through prophets, but he should not seek it.
  - The ministry of the NT prophet in this area is only *to confirm* what people already have in their own spirits.

(An example is in Acts 13 where the Lord told the prophets to set aside Saul and Barnabas for the work that he called them to . . . the implication was that Saul and Barnabas had already heard the call, and the prophets were confirming this call . . .)

- Under the Old Covenant, only the priests and the prophets were anointed by the Holy Spirit.
  - What you would call the laity—the common Joe—did not have the Spirit of God on them or in them.
  - Therefore, under the Old Covenant, they would seek guidance through the prophet because he had the Spirit.
- Under the New Covenant, we not only have the Spirit of God upon us—we have Him **in** us!
  - Under the NT, it does not say, “As many as are led by prophets, they are the sons of God.” The NT says, “As many as are led *by the Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God.”
- The primary way we are led and guided is by the inward witness
  - a “check”
  - a red light or green light
  - an inward intuition . . .
  - the more you think about it the better you “feel”
  - a velvety-like feeling . . .
- If you learn to follow that inward witness it will guide you in all the affairs of life—spiritual, physical, emotional and financial.
- This won’t come overnight, or by next Saturday night. But as we learn to develop our spirit, renew our minds and follow that inward witness, he will guide us in every area of our lives.
  - You need to be willing to wait. “. . . *it is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises . . .*”

- Follow your deepest premonitions. The inward witness is just as supernatural as guidance through visions and visitations.
  - It is just not as spectacular.
  - Many people are looking for the spectacular and missing the supernatural that is right there all the time.

Anyone who believes in the Son of God *has this witness* in himself . . . has this testimony *in his heart . . . inwardly confirms . . .* possesses this divine attestation . . . —I John 5:10

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For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God . . .  
—Romans 8:14

- The sons of God can expect to be led by the Spirit of God
  - They are not led by somebody telling them what to do.
  - The Holy Spirit is going to lead us.
- How does he lead us? Verse 16 tells us:

The Spirit *bears witness* with our spirit . . . *testifies* with our spirit . . .  
*touches* our spirit and confirms . . . *speaks to us* deep in our hearts . . .  
(Romans 8:16)

- Sometimes, when God is leading you, you can't really explain how you know—you just know, right down on the inside of you. You know it! You know it by the inward witness.
- I was born again October 26, 1979 at 3:20 am . . . Since that day the thought has never occurred to me that I might not be saved. Sure, I have run into people that said because I wasn't baptized their way; or because I didn't attend their church; or because I spoke in tongues or whatever reason they happen to adhere to . . . But none of it disturbed me. I smiled and went on my way. Because I had the witness!

## Human Effort

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you—a new heart with new and right desires; I will remove from you your heart of stone—that stony heart of sin—and give you a heart of flesh—a heart that is God-willed. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees—in fact, it make it possible for you to do what I tell you and be careful to keep my laws. —Ezekiel 36:26-27

- People used to refer to *putting out fleeces*: “Lord, if you want me to do this . . . you do that . . .” Or, “God, if you want me to do this, then have that happen . . .”
  - This would save a lot of time and inconvenience of praying—just put out a fleece
- This came from an event with Gideon. It is found in the sixth chapter of Judges:

Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised- look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.” That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

- Fortunately God has a better, more intimate way of leading us.
  - Don’t use the Old Testament as your guide. We have something better.
  - The Old Covenant is for spiritually dead people.
  - If you walk with Christ—you have believed in him as your savior—you are alive!
  - You have the Spirit of God in you.
- Remember Gideon was not a prophet, a priest or a king.
  - Only a Prophet, priest were anointed by the Spirit of God.
  - The Spirit of God was not personally present with the rest of the people.
  - That’s the reason every male had to present himself at the temple in Jerusalem once a year. The Presence of God, was kept in the Holy of Holies.
  - When Jesus died on Calvary, the curtain that concealed the Holy of Holies was torn in two—from top to bottom—and God moved out. He has never dwelled in earth-made houses since. He dwells in us! (We don’t *go to church*—we are the Church!)
- In the New Testament, Spirit-filled Christians are not to put out fleeces: “Lord, if you would (fill in the blank) then I would know . . .”

## Following the Witness

*For you will light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness  
... (Psalm 18:28)*

Moving to Ann Arbor:

Several years ago, when the Lord was directing my wife and I to move to Ann Arbor, we were both reluctant to move. I loved my position of leadership in our church; my wife had a good career at the local newspaper; we had just purchased our home and three pieces of rental property . . . things were going well for us.

One Easter Sunday, we visited a church in Ann Arbor that my sister-in-law was attending. I was very impressed with the leadership in the small fellowship. For whatever reason, I was very impressed in the church and was drawn to its ministry. Deep inside, I heard the voice of my Lord instructing us to move to join this church.

The idea seemed silly at the time, so I dismissed it and continued on doing what I was doing. But the leading persisted and we went back to visit the church for another Sunday morning service.

Although I was impressed with the ministry taking place at that church, I wanted to stay where I was. However, whenever I was preparing for a lesson at my church's service, I would get a burden to move to Ann Arbor.

Mostly this happened while praying in tongues—remember, when we pray in tongues, our spirit is praying, and at least for me, that is when I am more open to hearing the direction from the Lord.

In hindsight, I think my hesitation was I didn't truly want to move. I was comfortable where I was. But then I heard Steve Camp say, "There's safety in complacency but God's calling us out of our comfort zones into a life of complete surrender to the cross. To live dangerously is not to live recklessly but righteously and it is because of God's radical grace for us that we can risk living a life of radical obedience for Him."

That hit me hard. So, finally after a few months of this, I told the Lord, "Okay, fine, I'm willing to listen to your ideas . . ."

A little bit later, now remember, you don't have to be in a hurry about some things. Faith doesn't get in a hurry. You move out of faith and lose the leading of God. Anyway, later I asked my wife if she had any leadings regarding Emmaus Fellowship and moving to Ann Arbor from the Lord?

"Well, if he has, I don't know it. I thought that was just me . . ."

I realized that she had an inward witness just as I did. Sometimes the inward witness is there and we don't recognize it.

I was convinced that God was directing us to move to Ann Arbor. I went first, to spend time with the leaders and learn more about the ministry.

My father-in-law invited me to stay with them and helped me get a job working for his company. I spent several months in Ann Arbor and frequently met with the leaders and their families.

It was a difficult decision to finally move to Ann Arbor. From the natural standpoint, my wife and I did not want to move—her leaving her job; me leaving a place of leadership; our rental properties; my parents; all of our friends . . . In my heart I wanted to obey God, but in my own natural human thinking and mind, I did not want to go.

So I kept praying. I was honest and I told the Lord that I didn't *want* to trust that inward witness. I wanted the Lord to move in some *supernatural* way—I wanted some kind of word, tongues and interpretation, a prophecy, or God just to write up in the sky, "GO TO ANN ARBOR." I was on my knees bawling and squalling and begging—acting like a spoiled baby, actually . . . "Lord, if you could just give me some supernatural sign, I would feel better about this."

I learned that God leads by an inward voice as well as by an inward witness. That inward voice said, "Get up from there and quit acting like that!" He said, "You have all I am going to give you. You don't need any supernatural sign. You don't need any supernatural writing in the sky. You don't need any tongues and interpretation. You don't need any prophecy. You know on the inside of you what to do. Now do it!"

I said, "Okay . . ."

- Many times we ignore the inward witness.
  - Sometimes because we don't agree with what that inward witness is telling us
  - We seek the sensational and miss the supernatural.
- 
- We need to learn that God leads all of his children, primarily, by an inward witness.

## Number Two: The Inward Voice

—The number one way the Spirit guides is through the inward witness. The second way is by the inward voice.

—the inward man has a voice—just as the outward man has a voice. We call this voice *conscience*; the *still small voice*.

Regarding our move to A2 . . . it was obvious to me that we were to move, but I did not want to. The move would force me out of my “comfort zone.” During that time there were several nights when I couldn’t sleep. Ordinarily I have no trouble sleeping.

But there were times during that period when I could not sleep. My conscience was hurting. My conscience is the voice of my spirit. My spirit knew I wasn’t listening to it.

Finally one night I was lying there quietly and I said, “Lord, if you want us to move to Ann Arbor, we will. I’ll be honest and tell you that I don’t want to, but I don’t want to stand in your way, either. You are my Lord and I will obey and follow your direction . . .”

Then on the inside of me I heard the still small voice.

Now I’m not talking about the Spirit of God speaking. When the Holy Spirit speaks it is more authoritative. The still small voice is the voice of our own spirit speaking. But our own spirit picks up from the Holy Spirit who is in us.

That still small voice, that inward voice, not authoritative, just something on the inside of me said, “I am going to send you there for your growth and enrichment . . .” I also heard that there would be many troubles and trials while there—frankly, that it would be an extremely difficult time for us. It has been over 19 years now, and I have slowly begun to understand—at least a little—why and what his intentions were for the move . . . the rest is still unfolding for me.

(Oakland drive)

Before my wife and I were married, we began looking for an apartment to live in after our wedding. We began looking through the newspaper to see what was available. We also looked at our finances to determine what we could reasonably afford.

We visited a few places but nothing seemed “just right.” So I suggested we sit down and decide exactly what we were looking for and wrote it down on a piece of paper. We both wanted natural wood floors; a fireplace; a study and at least one bedroom; a quiet neighborhood and a few other particulars that we listed.

When we finished our list—including the rent we could reasonably pay, we set it on a table and prayed. We asked the Lord to find the place for us because we were tired of looking and needed his help. Then we

posted the sheet of paper on a bulleting board and waited for the answer to come.

This was only a couple of months before our wedding and my future wife had canceled the lease on her current apartment. She had to be out of her current apartment at the end of the next month.

We finally found an apartment listed in the newspaper and the listing described almost exactly what was written on our sheet . . . from the wooden floors to a stone fireplace . . . and a quiet neighborhood!

We looked at the apartment and the moment I walked in—I mean the second I saw it, a still small voice told me it would be ours! I couldn't see how, because the rent the Landlord was asking was considerably higher than we could afford, but I knew—I can't tell you how I knew—but I knew as well as I knew my name—we would be living in that apartment. It was actually the first floor apartment of a home that had been converted to a duplex.

We made an offer to the Landlord, his name was Warren I think, but he refused to lower the rent. So there we were, getting married in 1½ months, and no place to live. My fiancé was getting worried.

She kept looking at other apartment listings, but I refused to look at them. To this day I am shocked she was still willing to marry me . . . any how, I knew as well as I knew I was alive, that apartment would be ours. My fiancé was also convinced, but didn't see how it would happen. One thing I have learned, at least for me, when I hear that voice—that still small voice—I also receive the faith to stand strong with what that voice has told me. It certainly doesn't demonstrate anything about me that is more “spiritual” than my fiancé (or now-wife). Her strengths and wisdom far exceed anything I have experienced. She has a tremendous gift of discernment—one that is often disconcerting for me . . .

But I refused to move from what I KNEW was going to happen. I called Warren a few times and his response was the same. In fairness to Warren, he felt he needed a certain amount for rent, he argued that it was a great apartment and he didn't feel a need to reduce the rent.

I won't argue that the rent was not reasonable. We were not trying to “rip him off.” We honestly evaluated what we could afford and went from there. Also, when we first saw the apartment we did not “decide” that was the one we wanted—then try to convince the Lord to make it happen. When we walked in, I was convinced the Lord said he would give it to us.

Each time I called Warren, he would say the apartment was already rented, or that someone was on their way over to put down a deposit. He had removed the listing in the newspaper and so it appeared that it was indeed, rented. This went on for a month and finally, two weeks before our wedding, I made one more call to Warren. He was shocked—yet excited to hear from me because he had lost my phone number. It seems that *every* time he had the apartment rented—the new tenants backed out or didn't pass his credit checks—or simply did not show up.

He agreed to lower the rent if I would be willing to mow the lawn and shovel the sidewalk during the winter. Of course I agreed to that. I called my fiancé and told her the news. We took over our deposit and she moved in a few days before our wedding . . . Glory to God!

Another incident was when we were looking for a house. (923 Lay Blvd.)

The minute I stood inside that house a buzzer went off inside me. I knew as well as I new my name, *this is it!*

Again, that still small voice, that inward voice said, “I am going to give you this house . . .” my wife and I got back in the realtor’s car and my wife said that we would need to pray about it. I looked at her and said, “Don’t worry, I already know that the house is ours . . .” My wife looked at me and said, “Well . . . okay, we’ll see what happens . . .”

Suddenly that inward voice said, “You watch me.”

Without going into all the details, it would surprise you how God gave us that house—it took over two years; several offers; the owner switching realtors and the final deal was better than my original offer . . .

What was interesting is that he was unable to sell the house for so long that the original realtor’s listing ended and the owner switched realtors. I called the new realtor and explained that I had made several offers when it was listed before but the owner was unwilling to accept our offers.

Again, I was not trying to take advantage of the owner; I was not trying to “rip-him-off.” I told the new realtor what I had offered and she agreed my offer was very reasonable.

Also, by this time I was a little frustrated and I didn’t care who knew where my confidence came from. I said to the realtor, “I know this will sound weird and you will think I am a nut, but when we first saw the house, the Lord told me the it would be ours and I don’t care how long it takes, we will eventually move into that house.”

The realtor chuckled and assured me she didn’t think I was a nut. It just so happened that her husband was one of the pastors of Agape Christian Fellowship—a church I was very familiar with. In fact I knew her husband well, and had only met her one time.

Needless to say we made another offer to the owner and he countered our offer with an even better offer and gave us the down payment; washer and dryer and a few other items that he didn’t want to move out of the house . . . Whoa!

— These are just a few examples of hearing and following the voice of the human spirit. I didn’t share them with you to brag or to give you the impression that I am some spiritual giant—I am a believer, just like you, and there have been times that I have been wrong or even ignored (much to my dismay, disappointment and detriment) the voice of my conscience—my inner-man—my spirit.

**Very Important:** This *inner witness*, this *voice*, is always accompanied by an amazing—undeniable—confidence. I can't explain it, but I knew without hesitation. For instance, regarding Oakland Drive, I did not see the house and “decide” it was the one I wanted—and from that time on was insistent that the Lord get it. It was not an example of “naming-and-claiming.” Yes, my confession was positive, but I was confessing what I heard the Lord tell me.

I simply “heard” deep on the inside that the house was ours. With that came a deep faith and confidence that it would be ours! I didn't ask for that gift of faith. I didn't confess several scriptures to make it happen—it simply came to me.

Like Father Abraham, with undaunted faith I looked at the facts—Warren wasn't willing to come down on the rent—he told me several times the place was already rented. Yet I refused to allow any distrust of what I believed to be a definite pronouncement of God to make me waiver. In fact, I drew strength from my faith and remained absolutely convinced that God was able to implement his own promise. I simply did not let it go. My wife-to-be was becoming anxious, but I was so convinced that the house was ours, I never saw a need to look for another place. This has been true every time I have “heard” this voice. The fulfillment to these promise has not always been immediate—some have taken months or years before I have seen the fulfillment. For Abraham it took over 40 years. (Adapted from Romans 4:18-24 *Phillips*)

Note: Romans 10:17: “faith comes by hearing what is told, and what is heard comes by the preaching of the message that came from the lips of Christ the Messiah Himself.”

*Word: Logos & Rhema:* the significance of *Rhema* in this verse (as distinct from *logos*) is that it is referencing an individual message or word which the Spirit speaks to our spirit. The verse could be read as saying, “So faith comes by hearing the rhema that the Spirit speaks to our hearts.”

## Conscience: Voice of the Human Spirit

*Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin—surveying the member of the council and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day—I’ve lived with a clear conscience before God all my life, up to this very moment” (Acts 23:1)*

- Go through the Epistles’ Paul wrote and see what he said about his conscience.
  - You will notice that he always obeyed it.
  - Some ask whether our consciences are safe guides?
  - Yes—if your spirit has become a new man in Christ. Your conscience is the voice of your spirit.
- Remember II Corinthians 5:17, “. . . if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things pass away and all things become new . . .”
  - These *new things* take place in man’s spirit, in the inward man.
  - He is first a new creation—a brand new man in Christ.
  - Secondly, old things pass away—the nature of the devil in his spirit is gone.
  - Thirdly, all (that’s A-L-L) things become new—in his spirit, not in his body and mind—now he has the nature and life of God in his spirit.
  - So . . . if your spirit is a new man with the Life and Nature of God, it is a safe guide.
- When you have the Life and Nature of God in you, your conscience will not permit you to do just anything. And if your are born again, you have the Life of God.
- You might choose to ignore the voice of your conscience—the voice of your spirit—but that does not mean that the voice was wrong—it means that you chose to ignore it!

For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He gave up His only Son, so that whoever believes in—trusts in—clings to—relies on Him will not come to destruction, be lost, but have Eternal Life—Everlasting life. (John 3:16)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is Eternal—Everlasting Life Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

- Somebody said, “That means we are going to live forever up in Heaven.” No it doesn’t. Consider this:

“These things I have written to you so that you would believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that You have Eternal Life . . .” (I John 5:13)

- *Have* is present tense. We have *Eternal Life* now. If you are a born-again Christian, you have the *Life of God* in your spirit. You have the *Nature of God* in your spirit.
- (Oh! If Christian would learn to follow their spirits! If they would learn to take advantage of the Life that is in them! It would turn the Church inside out and upside down and the world would see the greatest revival in history!)
- I attended church early in life—I was baptized as an infant—but that didn’t make me a Christian. My spirit was still unregenerate when I attended church meetings and summer retreats. I was truly born again Oct. 26, 1979 in the basement of my parents house. On my knees, my arms upraised and tears streaming down my cheeks . . . I prayed and from the bottom of my feet I experienced what felt like cold water rushing through my legs, up my body, into my head and out the tips of my upraised fingers . . . I was literally cleansed from the bottom of my toes to the tips of my upraised fingers!
- I learned then about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I knew then that I had the very Life and Nature of God in me!
- I have returned to college to obtain certification in computer networking, and I just realized that I can put that new nature to work in my life. I have recently decided to have a conversation with my Father . . .

“Now, Lord, I read in the Old Testament where Daniel and the three Hebrew children were in school in Babylon and you gave them favor with every teacher (Daniel 1:9). In many ways I believe you have given that to me, as well. Thank you.

“But when their three years of training were over, they were ten times smarter than the rest (vv. 18-20). Lord, I have your Life in me. John 1:4 says, ‘*In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*’ I realize that *light* stands for development. Please impart to me knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom so that I can be ten times better . . .”

Now I realize that doesn’t allow me to just skip by. I will study. I will listen in class to everything that is said; I will take notes; I will do all the labs. But by receiving Eternal Life into my spirit, and getting my mind renewed with the Word, my mentality will increase. I say that because the Life of God will do that for anybody.

Kenneth Hagin tells this story:

“The most amazing miracle I have seen of Eternal Life, affecting mentality was a girl I will call Mary. Her mentality was increased at least 90 percent.

“She started to school at seven and went seven years without getting out of the first grade. In those seven years she never learned to write her name. Finally, they asked her parents to take her out of school.

“As an 18-year-old, in in the church I pastured, I saw her behave like a 2-year-old. She would get down and crawl around on the floor like a baby.

If she happened not to be sitting with her mother, she would slide under the pews, or lift up her skirt and step over them, to get to where her mother was. Her clothes were always a sight. Her hair was never combed.

“Then one night, during an evangelistic revival meeting, Mary came to the altar. There she received Eternal Life—the Nature of God. A drastic change occurred instantly. The very next night she sat in the service and behaved like any 18-year-old young lady. She had fixed her hair and dressed up. Her mentality seemed to have increased overnight.

“Years later I was back in the city to help with a funeral. ‘What happened to Mary?’ I asked the church secretary. She led me out on the front porch.

“‘See all those new houses going up out there?’

“I said, ‘Yes.’

“‘That’s an addition to the city. Mary is building that. She’s a widow now. She handles all her own money. She is her own financier. She has three lovely children. They are on the front pew every Sunday. They are the best-dressed, best-mannered children in church. As church secretary I can tell you that Mary’s tithes and offerings are here every Sunday.’

“The life of God came into her!”

- I am absolutely convinced that we have never learned what we have received.
  - Most of us have thought that the Lord just forgave us, saying, “We’re the same old creature we always were. We’ll try to hold out, faithful until the end. If we get enough people to pray for us, maybe we can make it.”
- No, the Life of God is imparted to our spirits! The Nature of God is in our spirits! The Holy Spirit is living and abiding in our spirits!

## Two Experiences

Acts 8:5,12,14-17

*Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there . . . But when they believed the Gospel about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ as Philip preached it, they were baptized, both men and women . . . Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted and welcomed the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, And they came down and prayed for them that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit; For He had not yet fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then the apostles laid their hands on them one by one, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

- If you are born again, the Spirit of God is in your spirit.
  - There is no need to differentiate the difference between being born of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit.
  - The born-again Christian can be filled with the Spirit that he already has in him. And when he is filled with that Spirit, there will be an overflowing. He will speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives him utterance (Acts 2:4).
  - Also, Bible scholars know that water is a type or symbol of the Spirit of God.
  - Jesus himself used water to symbolize the Spirit:

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? . . . Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” –John 4:10-11, 13-14

- He also used water to symbolize the Spirit in the infilling of the Holy Spirit:

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. –John 7:37-39

- These are two different experiences.
  - The new birth is a *well of water* in you, springing up into everlasting life.
  - The infilling of the Holy Spirit is *rivers*—not just one river.
  - The water in the well is for one purpose.

- The water in the rivers is for another.
- The water in the well is for your own benefit. It blesses you.
- The rivers flowing out of you bless somebody else.
  
- We can see this illustrated for us in the Song of Solomon.
  - The maiden is compared to a garden—enclosed for the Lord alone.
  - Because she is completely under his control, she is able to fulfill all of his plans. People will look at believers (as exemplified by the maiden), and they will say, “This land that was laid waste, has become like the garden of Eden” (Ezek. 36:35); they will look us and realize that it was the Lord who did all this (see Isaiah 41:18-20).
  
- That being said, the Lord now makes the believer (or the maiden according to Song) an *enclosed spring*, a *sealed fountain*—simply because he wants to be the source of the *flowing streams*.
  - He guards the believer’s heart so that we will never be independent of him, we will never be able to give forth his life at our own will, or even according to the will of others. We will realize that we are helpless apart from him. He must be the Supreme Possessor, Controller, User, of every part of our being.
  
- In the Song, the Lord manifests himself in the redeemed one as a fountain of Living Water. “*The water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up,*” forever springing up to become flowing streams and “*rivers of living water.*” But these waters are sealed—enclosed inside his garden . . .
  - What are the conditions of his *unsealing*?
  - When does he open the fountains that are sealed up in our hearts?
  - On our part, it is the continuous living in him.
  - This is not one single act of faith, but a continual attitude of faith that keeps Jesus leading us every step of our life.
  - “*He that believes into me*” moment by moment, perpetually, will “ *dwell in me,*” and out of him will flow the rivers of life.
  
- On the part of others who want to experience this life and refreshment, the conditions regarding the unsealing of the springs are taught to us in a picture lesson in the story of the oil that flowed into empty vessels (II Kings 4:2-7), and by the water that filled the “*valley full of ditches*” (II Kings 3:16-17).

When walking in unbroken communion, and in entire obedience (up to light we have been given), we don’t need to worry about the flowing streams, because the Lord knows how to bring those who need it in contact with the overflow of his life. This life breaks forth spontaneously from us as we remain at rest under his care. Cool, huh?

Many times you will try to witness to someone, trying to find just the right words to say, but the words seem dry and lifeless. Then again, you might be speaking to someone and the last thought on your mind is sharing the life of Christ with them, yet the more you

speaking the more life you seem to be giving them. Without even the slightest intention, you are bringing life to the listener.

- Some people say, “If you are born of the Spirit, you have the Spirit, and that’s all there is.” But no, just because you have had one drink of water, is no sign you’re full water.
- There is the experience subsequent to the new birth of being filled with the Spirit—and as a result, out of the belly (the spirit) rivers of Living Water can flow.
- I have also heard others say that people who are not filled with the Spirit and speaking with other tongues, do not have the Holy Spirit. That is not true, either. If I drink half a glass of water, I may not be full, but at least I have water in me. If one is born of the Spirit of God, he has the Spirit of God living in him.

## God Inside

*. . . for we are the temple of the living God—a holy temple where God lives. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” —II Corinthians 6:16*

- If you are born again, the Holy Spirit is living and abiding in your spirit!
  - The only reason your body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit is because your body is the temple of your own spirit. He abides in your spirit. And he communicates with you through your spirit.
  - He does not communicate directly with your mind—he is not in your mind. He is in your spirit—he communicates with you through your spirit.
  - Your spirit does reach and influence your mentality.
  - Even as new “babes-in-Christ,” you can know things by an inward witness.
  
- I can think of several times when I knew ahead of time something that was going to happen.
  - One time I had gone to Indianapolis to attend a conference for the weekend. I left on Friday and intended to stay until Sunday. I had very little money, so I couldn’t get a hotel room, so I had borrowed a friend’s van and intended to sleep in it each night.

Late Friday night I woke up believing something back home was happening—I didn’t know what it was, but I couldn’t get back to sleep. It became so troubling that I simply prayed for safety and asked the Lord, that whatever my spirit was troubled about, would be resolved. I was strongly moved to return home.

Finally, I traveled back to Kalamazoo, MI. When I arrived, it must have been early evening, and everything at home seemed fine . . . I called around to some friends from church and after three or four phone calls, I reached, “Jan,” the leader of our singles group from church, and she told me to come over to her house as soon as I could.

I came over and discovered one of the other singles from our church was suffering a tremendous demonic experience. I believe it began late the night before and Jan had called one of the elders and was attempting to contact me—not knowing that I was out of town. (I had experiences in dealing with this type of ministry, that is why she was attempting to contact me).

The rest of the story isn’t important, but it is important to understand that I knew nothing of what was happening back home, but in my spirit I sensed something was wrong. I couldn’t explain it, but I KNEW there was a need

back at home. I didn't have all the answers—and thank God, I still don't have all the answers—but I know some things, praise God, and God will meet us as far as our faith and knowledge

I had a witness in my spirit that something was wrong—an inward intuition. This is something every Christian ought to have. It is something every Christian should develop. We should develop our spirits.

- I have heard of a family, who in less than ten years time had three serious accidents. People were injured, his wife was almost killed. He was seriously injured. The father of this family said, “Every one of those accidents could have been avoided if I had listened to that inward intuition.”

Yet, in similar instances people will say, “I don't know why that happened to such a good Christian.” They then point their fingers at God and say that God did it.

That father said, “If I had listened to that inward something—I just had an intuition that something was about to happen—I would have waited a little bit and prayed. Instead I thought, *I'm busy. I don't have time to wait . . .*”

- I know of people that felt that *something* and delayed a vacation—missing a flight to their destination—a flight that crashed and because they waited, were safe because they avoided the crash.
  - Many times, if we would have waited, God would have shown us. We could have avoided many things.
  - But don't moan and groan about past failures. Take advantage of what is ours and see to it that it doesn't happen again.
  - We can do nothing about what is past anyhow. We need to begin to develop our spirits, and learn to listen to them.
- The Holy Spirit is living in your spirit.
  - It is your spirit that picks up these things from the Holy Spirit and then passes them on to your mind by an inward intuition, or inward witness.
  - I know of a person that never wears a watch and simply relies on his spirit waking him in the morning and helping him keep whatever appointments he has. He has never slept in and never missed an appointment.
- Jesus said, “*If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him*” (John 14:23).
  - In this passage, Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit's coming. Jesus and the Father in the Person of the Holy Spirit come to make their home in us.
- “*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*” (I Corinthians 3:16). Another translation says, “The Spirit of God is at home in you.” That is where he lives—in you!

— *“for we are the temple of the living God—a holy temple where God lives. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”*

Put those three Scriptures together:

*“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him . . . Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? . . . for we are the temple of the living God—a holy temple where God lives. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”*

We have never yet plumbed the depth of what God is really saying. *“I will dwell in them. I will live in them. I will walk in them.”* If God is dwelling *in* us—and he is—then that is where he will speak to us.

## Depend on Your Spirit

Mark 11:23-24:

*“I tell you the truth, nothing will be too much for you. This mountain, for instance, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea—no shuffling or shilly-shallying’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says—whatever he commands will happen—it will be obeyed, it will be done for him—all that is required is the really believe and do not doubt in your heart. Listen to me, therefore I tell you, pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large—whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

- Your spirit knows things that your head does not know.
- Because the Holy Spirit is in your spirit.

Kenneth Hagin gave a testimony describing his miraculous healing:

When medical science gave me up to die as a teenager and said they could do nothing further for me, I knew somehow that if there was help for me anywhere it would be in the Bible.

I started in the New Testament because I knew I didn’t have much time. Eventually I came to Mark 11:23 and 24.

When I came to Mark 11:24, something from outside of me somewhere said to my mind, *That doesn’t mean what things soever you desire physically, or materially, or financially. That just means whatsoever things you desire spiritually. Healing has been done away with.*

I tried to get my Pastor to come and tell me what Mark 11:24 did mean. He did not come. One preacher finally did come. He patted my hand, put on a professional voice and said, “Just be patient my boy, in a few more days it will all be over.”

I accepted the verdict and lay there expecting to die. It was two months before I got back into the Bible and back to Mark 11:23 and 24.

I said, “Lord, I tried to get somebody to help me and I couldn’t. So I am going to tell you what I am going to do. I am just going to take you at your Word. When you were here on earth, you said it. I am going to believe it. If you didn’t lie about it, I am coming off this bed. Because I can believe what you said I can believe.”

Then I hit on this idea. (It took me a long time because I had limited use of my hands. They propped up the Bible in front of me and I scooted the pages.) I decided to run my references on *faith* and *healing*. I came to James 5:14 and 15:

*Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil*

*in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

--James 5:14-15

I thought all the rest of the healing Scriptures and prayer promises hinged on that—I thought you HAD to call for the elders of the church. (You don't have to—you just can if you need to.) so I began to cry, “Dear Lord, if I have to call for the elders of the church to anoint me with oil to be healed, then I can't be healed. I don't know any elders of the church that believe in that.”

I had been saved about six months, and I had never heard an inward voice. I am not talking about the voice of the Spirit of God—that is more authoritative—I am talking about that still small voice of my spirit.

My spirit said to me, “Did you notice that verse said that the prayer of faith shall save the sick?”

I had to look again. I'd had my mind on the elders and had missed that. “Yes,” I said aloud, “that is what it says!” It came as a real shock to me.

Then on the inside of me these words were spoken, “You can pray that prayer as well as anybody can.” Hallelujah!

But my spiritual education was slow—just like yours. I stayed in that bed nine more months before I finally saw that I had to believe I received my healing before it was manifested.

It was while I was praying and saying, “I believe that I receive my healing,” that I saw what I must do. I said, “I believe I receive my healing from the top of my head to the soles of my feet.” Then I began to praise God because I believed that I received my healing.

Again, on the inside of me, I heard these words—this was not that authoritative Voice, but just a still small voice, so faint I would not have heard it if my mind and body had been very active—“Now you believe that you are well.”

I said, “I sure do.”

That inward voice said, “Get up then. Well people ought to be up at 10:30 in the morning.”

I had been paralyzed. It was a struggle. I pushed myself. Finally I got up to where I was draped over the bedpost. My knees sagged down not far from the floor. I had no feeling from my waist down. But draped over that bedpost I said it again, “I want to announce in the presence of Almighty God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the holy angels present in this room, and I want to call the devil to record and all evil spirits that may be present in this room, that according to Mark 11:24, I believe that I receive my healing.”

When I said that, physically, I felt something. It felt like somebody above me was pouring a pitcher of honey on me. I felt it strike me on the top of my head. It seemed to pile up like honey would, and then it would begin ooze down over me. It had a warm glow to it. It spread down over

my head, down my neck and shoulders, down my arms and out the ends of my fingers, and down my body and out the ends of my toes.

I was standing straight! I have been straight ever since.

I share that testimony, not only because it is fascinating and a wonderful testimonial to the miraculous power of our Father, but because I want you to see something far more important. Kenneth Hagin listened to his spirit. Faith is of the spirit. Our faith will not work to its fullest until we learn some of these things. We need to learn to depend on Him that is in you. We need to learn to develop our own spirit. To have faith in our faith.

## Tender-Hearted

I John 3:19-21 *NIV*:

This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God

I John 3:10-21, *MSG*

This is the only way we'll know we're living truly, living in God's reality. It's also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves.

I John 3:10-21, *AMP*

By this we shall come to know (perceive, recognize, and understand) that we are of the Truth, and can reassure (quiet, conciliate, and pacify) our hearts in His presence, Whenever our hearts in [tormenting] self-accusation make us feel guilty and condemn us. [For we are in God's hands.] For He is above and greater than our consciences (our hearts), and He knows (perceives and understands) everything [nothing is hidden from Him]. And, beloved, if our consciences (our hearts) do not accuse us [if they do not make us feel guilty and condemn us], we have confidence (complete assurance and boldness) before God,

I John 3:10-21, *NLT*

It is by our actions that we know we are living in the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before the Lord, even if our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence. —

I John 3:10-21, *NLV*

This is how we know we are Christians. It will give our heart comfort for sure when we stand before Him. Our heart may say that we have done wrong. But remember, God is greater than our heart. He knows everything. Dear friends, if our heart does not say that we are wrong, we will have no fear as we stand before Him.

- Does the Holy Spirit condemn you if you do wrong as a Christian?
  - No. It is your own spirit that condemns you.
  - The Holy Spirit will not condemn us.
  - Why? Because God won't.
  - Study what Paul wrote in Romans. He asked: Who is it that condemns? Does God condemn? No, it is God who justifies.

- Jesus said that the only sin the Holy Spirit will convict the world of is the sin of rejecting Jesus (John 16:7-9)
- It is your own conscience—the voice of your own spirit—that knows when you have done wrong.
- I have found that even when I do wrong, though my spirit condemns me, the Holy Spirit is there to comfort me, to help me, to show me the way back. You will never read in the Bible where the Holy Spirit is a condemner. Jesus called Him the *Comforter*. The seven-fold meaning of that word from the Greek is brought out in the *Amplified Bible*:

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Strengtheners and Standby) that He may remain with you forever. —John 14:16 *Amplified*.

- He is all of those!
- He will stand by you when nobody else will.
- He will help you. He is a Helper!
- It is your own spirit that knows the moment you have done wrong.
- When I use profanity, look at something erotic or I am rude and inconsiderate to someone, I know on the inside it is wrong. What is it that condemned me?
  - The Holy Spirit?
  - No. It is my spirit. My spirit, this new creature, this new man doesn't talk like that or act like that.
  - The Life and Nature of God doesn't talk that way; or act that way or view those kinds of things . . .
- Now the flesh, the outward man, may want to keep doing the things he did, and talking the same way, but we have to crucify the flesh. A good way to crucify him is to bring it right out in the open.

Do it right at that moment. Don't wait until you are *moved*. In your heart, say, "Father, forgive me for . . ." "Whoever witnesses the swearing or is victimized by your rudeness or other actions, go to them—wherever they are—and apologize. Sure, they probably didn't even notice the language or the rudeness. Doesn't matter. You have to put this right . . .

- It is the voice of your spirit—your conscience. Keep it tender and don't violate it. Unless we keep a tender conscience, spiritual things will be indistinct to us. The conscience is the voice of our spirit—and it is our conscience, the voice of our spirit, that will relate to your mind what the Spirit of God is saying to you down in your heart.
- However, we can have our conscience seared.

. . . whose consciences have been seared—cauterized—deadened—in fact, they do it so much that their own hearts no longer say it is wrong . . . —I Timothy 4:2

- I have never been much of a coffee drinker, but imagine drinking coffee plain and hot! Fresh off the stove—so hot it would still simmer after it is poured into a cup. I have heard of some who can just puts it to their mouths and drink it down. Yikes!

How could they do that? I couldn't do that. My lips, the inside of my mouth, my throat and esophagus are so tender, just one teaspoon would burn all the way down. But over the years of drinking it hot like that, their lips, mouth, throat and esophagus have been seared and scared. The nerves have probably been destroyed after doing that.

Spiritually, the same thing can happen to us. If you continue to use foul language or gossip or speak rudely—view pornographic material—listen to degraded and offensive music—long enough, you will not find it offensive or degrading . . . “*in fact, they do it so much that their own hearts no longer say it is wrong . . .*”

- Consider the rule of boiling a frog.
  - If you drop a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will of course frantically try to clamber out. But if you place it gently in a pot of tepid water and turn the heat on low, it will float there quite placidly. As the water gradually heats up, the frog will sink into a tranquil stupor, exactly like one of us in a hot bath, and before long, with a smile on its face, it will unresistingly allow itself to be boiled to death. An example of the smiling-boiled-frog phenomenon, is provided by our own culture. When we slipped into the cauldron, the water was a perfect temperature, not too hot, not too cold. But eventually we became used to the negative attitudes of the people we work and live with; we listen to the language of those at school and work; the imagery on Television and in the lyrics of the music we hear; first we experience it, then we begin to tolerate it—which leads to endorsing it, then participating in it ourselves.
  - Or consider the use of vitamins. You can take vitamins religiously and experience great benefits from them. However, if you miss taking them one day, you won't notice any difference. You could even miss taking them two days without realizing the difference. However, if you quit taking them, it will take several days—maybe weeks or months—but you would notice the difference.
  - If you poured water onto a stone you would simply get it wet. However, if you allowed the water to just drip slowly onto the stone—continuously—eventually you could wear that stone down.
  - The Grand Canyon wasn't formed in one day. It took thousands—maybe millions of years for the water to wear down the rock and form the canyon.

- We won't just run out and commit some heinous sin. No, we gradually move into it, one step-one at a time. We "let down our guard" once and that leads to another, and another, then gradually what we at one time would never consider doing—we outright support and defend to that voice of our conscience.
- We used to Pastor college students and they would often confess that their relationship with the opposite sex were becoming too sexual . . . we tried to explain this principle. If you set a standard, then violate it even a little, it becomes easier the next time to push the boundaries even further . . . then a little further . . . then further . . . until you have totally thrown the standards out.
  - If they were serious about keeping things open and non-sexual . . . don't close their dorm room doors . . .
- We need to keep our consciences tender. We need to learn to confess the minute we miss it. The minute we offend someone, say something profane, watch a video that is distasteful—whatever it is—whenever our conscience condemns us, we need to correct it right then. Don't wait until you go to church, or "feel" like it. Immediately say, "Lord, forgive me. I sinned—I missed it." If you have to make amends to someone that was offended or hurt by whatever you did or said, tell them. Say, "I did wrong. Please forgive me. I shouldn't have said (or done) that." Sure, they may think you're a nut—so what? Get it right with the Lord and whoever witnessed it or was victimized by it.
- You will have to keep your spirit tender if you are going to be led by the Spirit.

## How to Resist Temptation

- Marc Anthony
  - known as the *silver-throated* orator of Rome.
  - brilliant statesman
  - magnificent warrior
  - a courageous, strong leader.
  - It is said that he had all the qualities needed to become a ruler of the world.
  - However, he also had moral weakness
  - personal tutor shouted into his face on one occasion, “O Marcus, O colossal child, able to conquer the world but unable to resist a temptation.”

We all face temptations—the desire to disobey God and do things our way. Temptation dangles the luscious fruit of pleasure, prestige, and power in front of our eyes and whispers in our ear that it is ours for the taking. Never mind the consequences. Never mind the high price of sin and the guilt and harm that always follow.

Temptation is most dangerous when it takes you off-guard. So don't be caught unaware. Remember that no one, not even the most mature Christian, is above temptation. The first principle is this: temptation is inevitable. James begins his advice on temptation with this statement of certainty: “*When tempted . . .*” (James 1:13). Notice that James doesn't say *if*, but *when*.

*When tempted, no one should say, “I am being tempted by God;” for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone . . .*. (James 1:13)

At the beginning of the Civil War, the soldiers got confused as to who the enemy was because both sides wore blue uniforms. So the Confederates made their uniforms more distinctive: they switched to gray so their soldiers could recognize who was a friend and who was an enemy.

Knowing who to fight is a prerequisite for any battle; otherwise you might accidentally shoot your friends. Our Father never tempts us. He might allow trials, but He never solicits us to do evil. *Remember when you are tempted that the Lord is not the enemy.*

If the Lord is not the author of temptation, then who is? To find the answer, according to James, you need look no further than your own fleshly nature:

*But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.* (James 1:14–15)

Within your fleshly nature reside degenerate desires that, once stimulated, follow a consistent pattern. If you are aware of the temptation-desire-sin-death cycle you can help stop it—before it's too late.

Bait is placed in front of you. Satan is a wily enemy. Although he is not a mind-reader, he knows our nature too well for comfort. He knows our weaknesses and our secret (and sinful) desires. Even though he is no mind reader, he is a people reader. He's had lots of practice. When you are tempted, you can count on Satan taking the best opportunity to lead you astray by offering you something you crave.

Sinful desire kicks in. Unfortunately, Satan is not your only enemy. Since the Fall, all people have a fallen nature, one that is drawn towards evil. Your old-unregenerate man—the fleshly nature—desires to sin. You enter the danger zone when you linger on the thought of sin, anticipating the pleasure you may receive from it.

The greatest weakness in our struggles is an undisciplined and untrained mind. Satan can only attack us with T.I.S. . . . *thoughts, ideas* and *suggestions*. If we continue to allow our minds to rule us and if we refuse to discipline our minds, we will continue to fall in the same traps over and over, again.

No sin—and I do not exaggerate when I say NO sin—is committed without there first being a *thought, idea* or *suggestion*. Adultery does not *just happen*; theft is not *just an accident*; lies are not *just said*; they are all preceded with a *thought, idea* or *suggestion*.

In a battle, the enemy will attempt to mislead the opposing army. If the enemy is successful, the opposing commander will guide his troops right into a trap. You walk into a trap when you choose to pursue what you know to be wrong.

Just as the army that falls into an enemy's trap is decimated, so our sin brings terrible consequences. Like the physical law of gravity, the spiritual law of sin and death is always in operation. Sin brings destruction in your life and in the lives of others. The consequences may be immediate, such as the impact of an affair on a marriage. Or they may be less immediate, like a job loss due to dishonesty. Guilt, anxiety, distance in your relationship from God, and even sickness at times can be results of your sin (see I Corinthians 11:23–30).

At the core of every temptation is a lie. Remember Satan's insidious lie to Eve when he tempted her to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit. He said, "You surely will not die!" (Genesis 3:4). Tragically, she believed the lie and ate the fruit.

Jesus, in contrast, fought back the temptations of the devil with the truth. When Satan offered Him the world if only He would bow down, Jesus replied with the truth: "*Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only*" (Matthew 4:10). The most effective weapon in our arsenal against temptation is God's Word. When you hear the temptation whispering those lies in your ear, take up your sword of truth, and watch temptation retreat!

I mentioned that the spiritual law of sin and death is always in operation—in the world! Yes, I know we live in that world, but we are not subject to the laws of the world. The

law of the Spirit of Life which is in Christ Jesus—the law of our new being—has freed us from the law of sin and death. God was able to do what we could not do—we never had the ability to resist sin. Our will and the power to obey the “Law” was weakened by the flesh—our entire nature without the Holy Spirit. But God subdued—overcame—deprived our fleshly nature of its power. We are not to be governed by the standards and dictates of the flesh, but we are to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote, “. . . if you think you are standing firm—if you feel sure that you have a steadfast mind, be careful that you don’t fall into sin. No temptation—no trial regarded as enticing to sin—has seized you except what is common to man, that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance. But God is faithful to his word and to his compassionate nature, and he can be trusted not to let you be tempted beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand strong under it” (I Corinthians 10:12-13).

Effective soldiers are well-prepared for battle.

**Know your leader.** Without a personal relationship with Christ, we don’t stand a chance of standing against temptation. His Holy Spirit—through the voice of our spirit—warns us of sin and gives us strength to resist. Without Christ, we are lone-soldiers, fighting with no weapons.

**Follow your leader.** The necessary disciplines of quiet time, prayer, Bible study, and meditation strengthen and establish us in the faith. Those who are weak in the faith are easily entrapped by sin’s allurements. Soldiers do not march from their couch into battle; first, they must train. Our spiritual muscles must be in shape to withstand the attacks of the enemy. We must walk with the Lord closely every day, and this will arm us for battle.

**Rely on your fellow soldiers.** Accountability to another person is the perfect tactic to enable us to resist temptation. For many, that person is their spouse. But beyond our spouse, do we have someone else we can turn to?—a mature man or woman who can keep us focused on the battle and who asks us the hard questions about our life, thoughts, habits, and practices? If we know someone will ask us hard questions, it may deter us from engaging in a sinful practice. With others standing firm alongside us in this battle, we will see temptation’s power fade.

I often have people say, “you don’t need church. You can worship and pray and all that without going to church.” I usually respond that it may be *possible*, maybe you *can* . . . but you won’t. It also leaves you vulnerable and isolated. You need accountability and a secure relationship with another person working their way to heaven, as well. Believers are not to abandon their gathering together with other believers.

Refuse to be taken in by the tricks of the enemy. When tempted, be wise.

- \* Do not be fooled by what seems like a *safe* sin. It's true, you may not get caught. However, no one can hide from the eyes of the Lord. Also, if someone is caught in a sin, and you are called to restore him gently, watch yourself, or you may be tempted, also.
- \* Do not be deceived by the persuasion of the flesh. Your enemy and your own desires will downplay sin as harmless. The truth is, sin is always full of destruction.
- \* Do not be gentle with your emotions. Refuse to indulge yourself by thinking that you *need* this thing, or that it won't hurt to consider it. Reject those notions by turning back to God's truth.
- \* Do not be confused by immediate results. Sin may taste sweet on the lips, but it eventually rots the bones. Conversely, doing the right thing may be distasteful at first. It may require you to refuse a lover, to say no to an opportunity, or to release a pleasure. Yet ultimately, the Lord always rewards obedience. Do not let immediate results deter you from your ultimate goal of pleasing your Father.
- \* Finally, do not linger around tempting situations. "*Flee from youthful lusts,*" Paul advises young Timothy (2 Timothy 2:22a). And the flip side of "flee" is pursue: "*pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace*" (v. 22b).

Through a close walk with your Heavenly Father, an awareness of the tactics of the enemy, accountability in your life, and dedication to God's truth, you can overcome temptation.

—Here is a personal (but interesting point): As I was putting this last section together I was attacked—no, consumed like I don't ever remember ever being consumed before, with such a spirit of lust. It was overwhelming. Not once, but several times, I had to stop and take authority over the thoughts and the "pressure" that I was feeling.

**Further Suggestions.** Take a look at these passages to learn more about what Scripture says on this topic.

Genesis 3	Matthew 4:1–11	1 Corinthians 10:12–13
Galatians 6:1	Ephesians 6:10–18	1 Thessalonians 4:1–52
II Timothy 2:22	Hebrews 2:14–18	

## Feelings: Voice of the Body

Romans 8:16:

“ . . . *the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit . . .*”

- Too often people think that the witness this verse talks about is a physical *something*.
  - No. It is a spiritual *something*.
  - The Spirit of God bearing witness—testifying with our spirit.
  - He doesn’t bear witness with our body. We cannot go by a physical feeling.
  
- We often confuse things with our words.
  - We say, “I feel God’s presence.” No, not really—you *may* experience something—but we actually sense, spiritually, his presence.
  - Use the word feeling cautiously; it leaves the wrong impression that it is a physical feeling. Don’t mix the physical with it.
  
- Feeling is the voice of the body.
- Reason is the voice of the soul, or the mind
- Conscience is the voice of the spirit.
  
- If you go by feelings, you might get into trouble.
  - That is the reason many Christians are up-and-down—like yo-yo’s—in-and-out; happy-sad-happy-sad . . .
  - They go by their feelings.
  - When they feel good, they say, “Glory to God, I’m saved. Hallelujah! I’m filled with the Spirit. Everything is fine.”
  - Then something happens and they feel bad—their face is long—they are all bummed out and say, “I’ve lost it all. I don’t feel like I did. So I must be backslid.”
  
- People talk about “being in the valley,” then being “on the mountain top,” then getting back into “the valley” again. Sure, there can be trials, tests, “tribulations” but that doesn’t have to affect the believer. We can continue to shout our way through—we can live above the valley!
  
- We need to base our faith on the Word—not on our feelings!
  
- Smith Wigglesworth once said, “I am not moved by what I feel. I am not moved by what I see. I am moved only by what I believe. I cannot understand God by feelings. I understand God by what the Word says about Him. I understand the Lord Jesus Christ by what the Word says about Him. He is everything the Words says He is.”

## Help From Within

John 16:13:

But when he, the Spirit of truth—the Truth-giving Spirit—the Friend, comes, he will guide you into all truth—he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He will not speak on his own—He won't draw attention to himself—He will not speak his own message (on His own authority)—presenting His own ideas; but He will speak only what he hears from the Father, He will give the message that has been given to Him, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

- Jesus said the Holy Spirit would, “. . . *guide you into all truth . . .*” he will lead you. He will guide you.
- “. . . *He will not speak on His own—on His own authority; but what he hears, that He will speak . . .*”
  - Notice that he *does* speak.
  - Whatever he hears the Father say, he will speak to your spirit.
  - He does not speak out in the air somewhere. It is on the inside. He passes God's message to your spirit—either by an inward witness, or by an inward voice.
- “. . . *He will show you things to come . . .*”
  - I don't believe that just means about future events as recorded in the Word of God. It also means he will show *you* things to come.
  - In my own life, for instance, I have been seldom caught unaware of a death in our family. I knew two years in advance that my mother-in-law was going to die. So I began to prepare my wife for her death.
  - Before we were married I had borrowed my fiancé's car to travel to a conference in Dallas. While I was there, we were talking on the phone and I asked her about my car. I knew before I called that there had been an accident. It ended up being a very minor incident, but she was surprised that I knew about it.
  - there have been several incidents where I was prepared for something that was about to happen—we just need to learn to listen to our spirits.

But the Holy Spirit, (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthened, Standby), whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will make everything plain to you and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

- “*The Holy Spirit will teach you . . . He will remind you of everything I have said . . .*”
  - When I teach and even when I am writing these studies down, I may suddenly remember something I have read or written previously. It flashes in my mind. I

even know exactly where I read it or wrote it. I can grab the book or article—in the case something I have written, I can find it on my computer and re-read it.

- The Holy Spirit will show you things to come and bring things to your remembrance *if* you will learn to cooperate with Him.

## Number Three: The Voice of the Holy Spirit

Acts 10:19:

*While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you.*

- God leads us:
  - Number one by an inward witness
  - Number two by a still small voice
  - Number three by the Voice of the Holy Spirit
- When the Holy Spirit speaks it is more authoritative
- It can be so real—although it is inside you—you look around to see who said it. You think somebody behind you said something. Then you realize it was in you.
  - Remember the story of Samuel’s calling:
    - God calls out, “*Samuel, Samuel . . .*” he thought Eli was calling him.
    - On and on it goes, until Eli tell Samuel to listen to the voice of the Lord.
    - If this ever happens, it just before God moves in a more spectacular way
    - all of his leadings are supernatural; but not all of them are spectacular
    - when he speaks to you in what seems like an audible voice, for instance, there might be rough sailing ahead. If he didn’t speak so spectacularly you might not stay steady.
    - If it ever happens—which is rare, if at all—you will receive a great measure of faith with it.
    - Just for the record: I have never heard an audible voice. Nor will I look for it.
- I Thessalonians 5:21 says to *prove all things . . .*
  - Always remember this: the Spirit of God and the Word of God always agree.
  - Anytime the Spirit of God speaks to you—whether through that still small voice or an audible voice, it will always be in line with the Word.
- People have heard “voices” and receive every kind of “revelation” you can imagine.
  - Some people are always claiming to hear a voice. You can, and should, judge those things. You can judge whether it is right or wrong simply by judging it by the Word.

A young man who recently came to the Lord—came to me with a new revelation he *knew* the Lord had spoken to him. He was convinced that the Lord had lead him to our group to help me and teach me some very important things . . . I listened politely, I mean if the Lord can use a donkey to speak to a prophet—he can use a new believer to speak to me . . . but this young man shared his revelation and I listened for about ten minutes or so. I finally stopped him. I just couldn’t stand anymore.

We looked at several verses. He read them. Then I gave him a couple more. He read those. I pointed to a couple more and every one of them contradicted what he was telling me. I explained to him that we cannot accept anything that is not in line with the scriptures.

Because he was in “church” at the time he heard this voice, he figured it had to be God. Frankly I didn’t care if he was standing on top of the church. It still didn’t fit with what the Bible teaches.

He was still convinced God gave him this message. He decided to hang on to this “message” and if I refused to accept it, I was being rebellious . . .

- We are not to seek voices!
- We are not to follow voices!
- We should follow the Word of God
  
- That young man later left our church and began attending other fellowships. I lost track of where he went after awhile. I do know that he married some girl that was several years older than himself. But she eventually divorced him and he was still searching for a church that would listen to the things his “voices” were telling him.
  
- As long as someone wants to hang on to their beliefs, they can. As long as a sinner wants to live in sin, God will let him live in sin. But if he wants to change, God will meet him.

Even though a person is a Christian, does not mean he loses his free moral agency. He does not become a robot, a machine where God pushes a button and he automatically has to do whatever God wants him to do. He is still a free moral agent. As long as he wants things like they are, they will stay that way. But if he wants to cooperated with God, he can be helped.

- DO NOT SEEK VOICES!

“. . .there are, I suppose, many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance . . .” (I Corinthians 14:10)

- Do not accept anything without examining it in the light of the Word of God.

Remember the Bereans? They were considered to be more noble because when they received the message with great eagerness, they still examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true (Acts 17:11)

If only we could so noble . . .

## My Spirit? or The Holy Spirit?

Proverbs 20:27:

*“the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord . . .”*

- How can we tell whether it is our own spirit, or the Holy Spirit telling us do something? “Maybe its just *me* wanting to do it.”
  - If your spirit is a new creature in Christ Jesus, and old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and
  - If your spirit has the Life and Nature of God in it, and
  - If the Holy Spirit is in it, and your spirit is in fellowship with God,
  - it is not going to tell you to do something—or reveal something to you that is not right.
- It isn’t the inward man that wants to get into trouble—that is the outward man.
  - You should be able to tell whether it is the flesh wanting to do something, or the spirit. Here is a text that has been a puzzle for many:

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. (I John 3:9)

The Amplified Bible adds this to the above verse: *“No one born—begotten—of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, for God’s nature abides in him [His principle of life, the divine sperm, remains permanently within him]; and he cannot practice sinning because he is born of God.”*

This is speaking of the inward man. Physically we are born of human parents and we partake of their nature. Spiritually we are born of God and partake of his nature. God’s nature is not the nature to do wrong.

I’ve missed it—I’ve sinned—a lot of times as a Christian. But my inward man didn’t do it. He didn’t even agree with me when I did it. He tried to get me not to do it. My heart wept because I did it. My flesh threw me and I missed it, but my spirit never consented to it. That seed is in my spirit—not in my flesh.

- If we continue to allow our flesh to dominate us, we will continue to sin. If we continue to let our natural mind dominate us, and do not get our mind renewed with the Word of God, we will continue to miss it.

That’s why Paul wrote to born-again, Spirit-filled Christians at Rome to do two things:

1. Present your bodies,
2. renew your minds with the Word (Romans 12:1-2)

Until we renew our minds with the Word of God, our flesh and our unrenewed mind will dominate our spirit. That will keep us a baby—carnal Christian. Paul told the church in Corinth, “*Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—carnal—mere infants in Christ*” (I Corinthians 3:1). “*You are still worldly—carnal*” he said in verse 3. One translation says, “For you are body-ruled.” Then he told them, “*you are acting like mere men . . .*” He meant they were walking and behaving just like unsaved men do.

- When we get our minds renewed with the Word, then our mind will side with our spirit instead our bodies. The two of them—your spirit through your mind—will control your body.
- My spirit won’t tell me something wrong. It has the Nature of God in it, it has the Life of God in it, it has Love of God in it, it has the Spirit of God in it.

“Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God—His divine power—has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through that same mighty power, he has given--bestowed us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature—the very Life of God and escape the corruption in the world caused by lustful desires.” (II Peter 1:3-4)

We are born of God. We need to feed on the Word of God. Then we are able to feast and enjoy the divine nature, God’s nature. If we have the divine nature in us, our spirit will not tell us to do something wrong.

## Spectacular Guidance

Acts 27:9-10:

*“Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them, “Men, I perceive—I believe—that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.”*

- Paul said, *“I perceive—I believe . . .”* he did not say, *“I have a revelation . . .”* or the *“Lord told me . . .”* He said, *“I perceive”*
  - How did he perceive it?
  - By the inward witness.
  - He did not perceive it mentally.
  - He did not perceive it physically.
  - In his spirit he had this witness.”

A family of seven went out to dinner. The coffee and soft drinks and the children’s food had already been served when the father suddenly said, “Let’s rush home.”

Why?

“I don’t know. I just have an urge, a perception, that we should.”

They rushed home. A fire had started. If they had waited, everything would have burned. But the witness of the Spirit warned them in time.

If it had burned down, someone probably would have said, “God did that. He had some purpose in it.”

No, we have missed it because we didn’t listen. We have not been spirit-conscious.

The above story is an actual event. You cannot find anywhere in the Bible where God causes these things to happen to teach us something. In the events found in Acts 27, if they had listened to Paul they could have saved the whole ship and the merchandise. As it was, they lost all that and almost their lives. They would have lost their lives, but fortunately they listened to Paul.

God is not an enemy! He is trying to help us! He is not working against us! He is working for us!

As we become more spirit-conscious we can learn how to better cooperate with him. Remember that the primary way God leads his children is by the inward witness.

- God leads us the same way he lead the early church.
  - His Word works now, the same it worked then.
  - It has not changed and he has not changed.
  - The Spirit of God has not changed

- We can look into the Acts of the Apostles and elsewhere in the Bible to see how the Spirit lead them. Sometimes they received guidance through a vision. Other times from an angel who appeared and told them what to do.
- This didn't happen every day in these people's lives.
  - They occurred once or twice in a lifetime for most—if at all.
  - These are not the ordinary ways God leads.
  - We get the impression that nearly every day an angel appeared. Not so.
- Sometimes, while God is trying to bear witness with our spirit, we don't listen because we want something more spectacular—like a vision or an angel or writing in the sky . . .
  - We have no right to seek a vision or to seek audible voices . . .
  - We have no right to ask for an angel.
  - There are no Scriptures which say that we should ask for them or seek them.
  - We do have a right to claim what the Bible promises.
  - If God wants to send an angel, fine. If he wants to give a vision—he can do that.

But for the point of understanding them, look at Acts 10:9-11:

*About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.*

God showed Peter through a vision that he was going to bring in the Gentiles.

*While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." (vv. 19-20)*

These were three men from Cornelius' household. After Peter went there and preached to these Gentiles, he was called on the carpet up in Jerusalem. In verse Acts 11:11-12, Peter is rehearsing the matter:

*"Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house."*

The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter. Peter might have looked around to see who said that. We don't know. But he knew that the Spirit instructed him to go.

Acts 13:1-2:

*In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, THE HOLY GHOST SAID, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to do.”*

- Interesting. *The Holy Ghost Said . . .*
  - First we could notice under what conditions the Holy Ghost said something . . . the verse says, “*While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said . . .*”
  - This is just a side note to the actual text I wanted to study, but I am convinced churches need to have services where they minister to the Lord. Too often services just minister to one another. Bible studies are good; we need them. Special singing is good, also. But too many times we are not singing to the Lord, we are singing to the congregation. We need services where we minister to the Lord. Where we wait on him. In that kind of an atmosphere the Holy Ghost can speak to us.
  
- Looking at the above passage, there is a group of five ministers. We don’t know how the Holy Ghost spoke to them. It could have been that one of the prophets spoke it out. Of this I am sure—they all heard and they all agreed that the Holy Ghost was talking.
  - The Holy Ghost said, “*Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to do . . .*”
  - In Acts 11:12 Peter said, “*The Spirit instructed me to go . . .*”
  - There was confidence in the instructions and leadings.

## Guidance Through Prophecy

*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.* (I Corinthians 14:1)

*Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?* (I Corinthians 12:29)

- Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus, “*And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.*”

Then in the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter, on his journey, Paul landed at Tyre where the ship was to unload its cargo. Luke, who was traveling with Paul wrote, “*Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.*” (Act 21:4)

- But Paul continued on his journey:

“Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”

When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.” (Acts 21:8-14)

- Some believed that Paul missed it here.
  - But, when he went to Jerusalem and was indeed, arrested, Jesus stood by Paul in the night. He appeared to him in a vision. He did not rebuke or chastise Paul. He did not tell him that he made a big mistake. He said, “*Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome*” (Acts 23:11).
  - God was preparing Paul for what was ahead.
- Notice two things:
  1. the gift of prophesy
  2. the ministry of the prophet
- They are not the same—don’t confuse them.

- The fact someone prophesies does not make him a prophet.
  - I Corinthians 14:1—”Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.”
- If prophesying made you a prophet, then it would seem the Lord would have said that everyone should desire to be a prophet.
  - Instead Paul asked, “*Are all apostles? Are all prophets? . . .*”
  - The answer is no.
  - Since all could not be prophets, we wouldn’t be instructed to desire something we couldn’t have . .
- the gift of prophecy is speaking to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. (I Corinthians 14:3).
  - Sometimes when you are prophesying, it seems like there are two of you.
  - Almost like you are standing right beside yourself.
  - It is coming from your inward man where the Spirit of God who is prophesying lives and you listen to see what He says . . . but you are speaking to someone with the intent of strengthening or encouraging them . . .

#### The Office of the Prophet:

I don’t want to go too deep into this, but it is important to understand the difference.

- For someone to be a prophet, he stands in the office and uses that ministry gift.
  - Other spiritual gifts besides prophecy must operate in his ministry.
  - As I mentioned, the simple gift of prophecy is for speaking to someone to strengthen, encourage or comfort them—there is no *foretelling*, no prediction whatsoever.
  - However, in the ministry of the prophet, there is foretelling and prediction. The prophet has the revelation gifts (the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and/or the discerning of spirits).

**IMPORTANT**—realize that spiritual things can be misused just as natural things can be misused. Some think that just because it is spiritual, it has to be perfect—that it cannot be misused.

- People have lost fortunes following the guidance of a “prophet.”
  - Ministries have fallen because of people following the guidance of a “prophet.”
  - Marriages have been arranged—then fell apart because they were guided by a “prophet.”
- First, judge prophecies by the Word of God.
  - If it is not in line with the Word of God, it is not right.
- Secondly, you **MUST** judge personal prophecies by what you already have in your spirit. It should **CONFIRM** what is already there.

- If you do not have it in your own spirit, do not accept it!
- Do NOT *build* your life on prophecies. Do NOT *guide* your life by prophecies.
  - Build your life on the Word! Let those other things be secondary.
  - Put the Word of God first!
- I've heard people say, "Well, if God is doing it, it has to be all right . . ."

You have to realize that it isn't exactly God doing it. It is men doing it by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Anything that has man involved is not perfect—the Spirit of God is perfect—the gifts of the Spirit are perfect—but they are not always perfect in manifestations, because they are manifested through imperfect vessels.

*So let two or three prophets speak [those inspired to preach or teach], while the rest pay attention and weigh and discern what is said. But if an inspired revelation comes to another who is sitting by, then let the first one be silent.*

"*Let the prophets speak . . .*" He is talking about prophets here—not just everybody prophesying. Do not accept it just because a prophet said it. It is to be judged according to the Bible. We are not judging people, we are judging what was said.

Then notice that it says, "*But if an inspired revelation comes to another (prophet) . . .*" Prophets have revelations. Others might occasionally, but prophets have a ministry along this line . . .

Here is another important point: "*The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets*" (I Corinthians 14:32)

- People say, "God made me do that. I couldn't help but say that . . ."
- Phooey! The spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of the prophets . . .
- You do not *have* to say it. It comes out of your spirit—it is subject to your control.
- The gifts of tongues, the interpretation of tongues and prophecy operate under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
  - It might be that God, through these methods wants to give a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom or revelation as we need it.
  - We initiate the operation of these manifestations.
  - We are the ones who have to speak them.
- Many times when the Spirit of God is moving, anyone who can prophesy or speak in tongues *could* do so . . . but that does not mean they *should*.
- A perfect example of this is in Job chapters 32-37 . . .
  - After the "wise" men gave their messages, Elihu speaks up . . .
  - Elihu: my favorite character

- He is sitting back and listening
- Never mentioned before—possibly because of age
- When he speaks, obvious possessed spiritual discernment
  
- First he speaks as a Messenger of God
  - Demonstrates modesty
  - “wrath was kindled”
  - “ready to burst”
  - he waited until it was time to speak
  - Ezekiel: “heat of the Spirit”
  - Jeremiah: God’s word “in his heart like a burning fire”
  - “weary of holding it in.
  - Amos: “When the Sovereign Lord has spoken, who can but prophesy—woe to me if I do not”
  
- “Burning fire; “ready to burst” signs of an inward witness
  
- Elihu waits until given permission from Lord to speak
  - Ask what to say; then ask when to say
  - Proverbs 15:23: “A man has joy in making an apt answer and a work spoken *in the right moment*—how good it is!”
  
- Elihu then seems to need support and encouragement of listeners
  - silence intimidates us
  - Epistle of Barnabas: “When in the company of unbelievers, be careful how you use the Word of God. Do not cheapen it by introducing it at an inappropriate moment, when it may lead to ridicule or blasphemy.”
  
- When given permission by the Lord to speak:
  - Don’t hold back
  - Jeremiah: “tell them whatever I tell you to say. Don’t be afraid of them, to else I will make a fool of you in front of them because I have made you impervious to their attacks. They cannot harm you.”
  - Ezekiel: “Go to the people and whether or not they will listen, tell them: this is what the Lord God says!”
  
- Brother that would attend different services and inevitably he would give a lengthy pronouncement in tongues—he would NEVER interpret his ranting—but each time it would be an identical message in tongues . . . my wife was able to give an exact rendition of his message.

Every service—if he happened to be there—he would stand up and speak in tongues. The message went out like cold water over the crowd. It deadened the service..

Several Pastors and ministers had spoken to him. We even pulled aside one night and spoke to him. We told him the when a message in tongues are given in a public

assembly—there should always be an interpretation—and it should be a blessing to the congregation. It will lift the service higher. He took great offense to us—as he did to every Pastor and minister that had spoken to him. He said we were stifling the movement of the Lord—when he felt the “unction” he had to give forth the message . . . if he is still alive today, I am sure he is still giving forth the same message in tongues. He was unteachable and undisciplined.

- Regarding prophecies . . . I admonish people to be very careful about personal prophecies. So many lives and ministries have been shipwrecked and ruined by not being careful about them.
  - Don’t marry someone because somebody prophesied you should
  - don’t do investments that way
  - don’t enter the ministry because someone prophesied over you
  - If the prophecy confirms what you already have, accept it.
  - If it doesn’t, don’t accept it.
  - The Holy Spirit said, “*Separate Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to . . .*” He had already called them. This was just a confirmation of it.
  
- As long as the gift of prophecy stays in the realm of encouraging, strengthening and comforting, it is wonderful—encourage that.

## Guidance Through Visions

Acts 10:1-3:

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

There are so many things in this text that are so fascinating, it is hard to narrow it down. First know that Cornelius was a devout man, but he was not a Christian—he didn’t know anything about Jesus. However, his care and concern for the poor got the Lord’s attention—that’s pretty cool, don’t you think?

The angel who appeared to him in this vision could not tell him about the Gospel, because God had given that responsibility to us. However, the angel did tell him where to find someone who would tell him how to be saved.

Although, angels have the ability, as God permits, to become visible to the natural eye. Hebrews 13:2 says, “*Don’t forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*” But Acts 10:3 refers to Cornelius’ experience as a vision. It was a spiritual vision. He actually saw into the spiritual world and if anyone else had been present, they would not have seen anything. If the angel had taken on a visible form, anyone could have seen it. Just so you know, during the “Tribulation Period,” there will be visible angels—and because the Church will have been removed, they will be preaching salvation to the world. Many believe the “Tribulation Period” to be a time of doom and gloom, but it will actually be a time of great revival.

Anyway, to get on with the issue of visions . . . There are three kinds of visions that the Bible speaks of. There are: spiritual visions, trances, and open visions.

It is also extremely important to know that I have never had any type of vision. I will be teaching strictly from what is clearly seen in the Bible—and not from experience. I will stress this more fully later, but we are never instructed to seek a vision.

- **Spiritual visions:** seen with the eyes of the spirit—not with physical eyes. In Acts 9, Paul had a spiritual vision. He did not see Jesus with his physical eyes.

*Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. —Acts 9:8*

- When the Lord spoke to him, his eyes were shut. So, whenever he saw whatever he saw, it was not with his physical eyes. When his eyes were opened, he was blind.
- Trance: Peter fell into a trance:

*About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.*

- **A Trance:** all physical senses are suspended. The person will be unaware of where they are at the moment. They are not unconscious, but they do not know what is going on around them. They are more aware of spiritual things than physical things.
- **An Open Vision:** Physical eyes wide open—physical senses intact. Look at the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> chapters of John:

John 20:15-30

“Woman,” he said, “why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

This was clearly an open vision. Mary saw him with her physical eyes and spoke to him with her mouth. Then Mary went to the disciples and said, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Again, the contact was physical. They saw him with their physical eyes.

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Thomas had the opportunity to touch him with his physical hands . . .

- In visions, sometimes things are symbolic.
  - Remember in Peter’s vision he saw all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds.
  - He was perplexed and had to think about the vision.
  - The Spirit spoke to him as he thought and instructed him to go with three men that were going to knock on the door—who were sent by Cornelius.
  - Pete still didn’t know exactly what the vision meant, but when he went, things happened and he began to understand that God had called the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, ‘Go to that chariot and stay near it.’” —Acts 8:26-29

- Some people admit that God spoke to the apostles, such as Peter, but they claim such divine visitations were only for the apostles . . .

- Philip was not an apostle. According to Acts 6:5, he was chosen as a deacon. The highest “office” he ever filled was that of evangelist (Acts 21:8).

It’s sad that the Church has been robbed of the supernatural manifestations we should have had, simply because they closed the book on it and said, “That was just for the apostles. All that stopped when the apostles died . . .”

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord,” he answered.

The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight. —Acts 9:10-12

- Ananias was not an apostle, or a deacon—he was just a disciple. Just a layman—an average Joe . . . Yet the Lord used him.

[We should all put ourselves into a position where God can use us as he sees fit. We don’t have to wait for a vision before we do anything. God may give us a vision, or he may not. An angel may appear, or he may not . . . it doesn’t matter.]

To finish this up—although God does lead us through visions and other supernatural manifestations, do NOT seek a vision. You could get beyond the Word where the devil can deceive you. We often prefer to have a more direct word of guidance, but we don’t always have it. So don’t try to manufacture it if it is not there. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that anyone was seeking a vision when it came. They just happened without their asking for it.

Be content, if that is all you ever have, to follow the inward witness. But educate and train and develop your human spirit where that witness becomes real and more real to you.

Then, if God sees fit—or if he determines the need—for supernatural visitations and manifestations, just thank God for them.

Know that the angels of God are with you. Your angel is with you whether you ever see him or not.

## Listen to Your Heart

Acts 27:9-10:

*“Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them, “Men, I perceive—I believe—that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.”*

- Paul did not say, “The Lord told me . . .” he simply said, “I perceive . . .”
- In his spirit, Paul had an inward perception—a witness—an inward premonition.
- He did not perceive it mentally.
- He did not have some type of vibration.
- He did not perceive it physically—in his spirit he had a witness.

I realize I have already covered this over and over, but it is important to know that this belongs to all of us. The Holy Spirit living in our spirits must communicate with us through our spirits—not through our minds. That is why your spirit knows things your head doesn’t know. Unfortunately, we have never been taught to listen to our spirits. And sometimes we are reluctant to do that.

I am convinced that the reason we continually miss it, make mistakes, and fail is because our spirits—which should guide us—are kept locked away in a prison. Knowledge—or our intellect—has taken the throne.

Any person who shuts his spirit away and never listens to it, becomes crippled in life and an easy prey to selfish and designing people.

When we were Pastoring a fellowship at Western Michigan University, I met a young man that seemed genuine and on fire for Jesus. He was with Maranatha Ministries, which was a college outreach based out of Florida. I had heard many things about Maranatha Ministries—mostly good. For whatever reason I could not discern, I was concerned about this young man. He asked to speak to our fellowship and before I obliged him, I introduced him to my Pastor to see what he thought . . .

My Pastor was taken with him. He was a very strong, charismatic and charming individual. He had an obvious enthusiasm for Jesus and reaching out to people. All the indications seemed good. I began to dismiss my hesitations—my inward witness—to many things . . . I figured I must be jealous that he has “more” fire than me . . . he might be able to accomplish more . . . I don’t know, everybody else seemed taken with him, I could not figure out why I felt uncomfortable about him.

I allowed him to teach one night and the talk was excellent—very challenging and uplifting. Whatever reservations I had I could not explain or defend—my reservations and concerns seemed unfounded . . .

One night I gave a word of knowledge regarding someone coming in to destroy the sheep . . . so-on and so forth . . . the young man came up to me afterward and asked if I was talking about him . . . I looked him in the eyes and simply asked, “Should I be?”

He never came back to our group or spoke to me. Several months later, three young girls were no longer attending our fellowship and I was concerned about them. Two of the girls, twin sisters, had just come to the Lord, and although they dressed somewhat “gothic”—or as gothic looked in the early 80s . . . they seemed to have a sincere conversion. The third young lady—I’ll call her Joyce—was a strong believer in which my wife and I had seen tremendous devotion. She also became a close friend of ours.

We saw the twins sisters and they were so clean-cut and “normal” looking they could have been seen on *Happy Days* . . . I swear they looked like Mormon evangelists . . . the third girl was so “spiritual” she seemed odd—almost Zombie-like. We didn’t recognize the sweet girl we once knew.

We discovered that they had joined Maranatha Ministries and were given very strict rules to follow—from who to fellowship with - to what music they could listen to.

Several years later, Maranatha Ministries had a tremendous shakeup and we learned that Joyce’s parents “rescued” her and took her through a series of “deprogramming.”

The point I want to make is this. If only I had listened to my spirit. I don’t mean a voice. I don’t even mean a still small voice. I just mean the inward witness. I had a *check* in my spirit. If I had listened to it maybe I could have saved some people’s lives . . .

I used to have college students ask me where they should go after graduation—they wanted a prophetic word, or a word of knowledge—some asked about who to marry . . . I will never give that type of guidance to anyone—including my own children.

I recently had one of my sons asked me if I “saw” him and his girl friend being together—he was implying being married . . . he had previously asked me about his twin and his girl friend and I told him what I “felt.”

I told him I would prefer not to share that kind of information—it wasn’t for me to say or to judge their relationship. But he continued to press the issue and he was disappointed with my answer . . . later, when he broke off the relationship, he admitted that I was right.

If we as individuals would have listened to our hearts—an inward witness, or an inward voice—we would not have made the same decisions.

Personally, I have lost money by not listening. I have committed sins by ignoring that inward voice. Why did I do it? Well, why did you do it?

But just because we have made mistakes, don’t quit. We don’t quit in the natural world just because we made mistakes. If the phone rings in the middle of the night and you

stumble over a stool and fall down trying to answer it, you don't just lie there. You get up and answer the phone. Just because you bust your shins or stub your toe physically, you don't quit. And just because you stumble or stub your toe spiritually, you shouldn't quit, either.

As I said, the person who keeps his spirit shut away and never listens to it becomes crippled in life. The person who listens to his spirit is the man or woman, boy or girl who climbs to the top!

If Christians would just check up on the inside of themselves in most of the affairs of life, they would know what to do.

You don't need to seek guidance when the Bible has already told you what to do. Go ahead and do it. The Bible tells you how to act in every circumstance of life. It tells husbands how to treat wives. It tells wives how to treat husbands. It tells parents how to treat their children. It tells children how to respond to their parents. The Bible tells all of us to walk in love—divine love. And that divine love, which seeks not its own, is also a matter of the heart.

## How To Train The Human Spirit

*The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts*  
—Proverbs 20:27

— Here are some things we have learned:

1. The Lord enlightens and guides us through our spirits
2. We need to become more spirit conscious
3. We need to train our spirits to where they will become safer guides

— We have been held back because we are more physical-conscious (body-conscious) and more mental conscious (soul-conscious).

- We have developed the body and the soul, but we have left the spirit of man almost untouched.
- Our spirit can be educated just as our mind can be.
- Our spirit can be strengthened and trained just as our body can be.

— Four ways to train our spirit:

1. By meditating on the Word
2. By practicing the Word
3. By giving the Word first place
4. By instantly obeying the voice of our spirit

**Meditating the Word:** You cannot develop spiritual wisdom without meditating on the Word. Look at Joshua 1:8:

*Don't for a minute let this Book of the Law be out of mind or depart from your mouth; Study it continually; Meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to practice everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful—then you will deal wisely and have good success.*

- This is the only place in the early English versions where the word *success* is found. The secret of success is given in verses 5 through 9. Joshua accepted Moses' place of leadership without misgivings. To go *all out* for God was a part of his being, already (Deut. 6:3-5; Ps. 1:1-3; Luke 10:25-28).
  - think of it. If God did not want Joshua to be prosperous, why did he tell him how to prosper? If he did not want him to succeed, why did he tell him how to have success?
  - To paraphrase this verse, we would say, “the Word of God—particularly the New Testament—should always be in your mouth—or spoken often. Meditate on it day and night, so that you can do everything it tells you to do. Then you will prosper and have success!

- Take time to meditate in the Word of God. Start out with at least 10 or 15 minutes a day—then increase the time as you go.
- Just lie in your bed, if you need to, and meditate on the Word. I promise you will accomplish more and go further than by just praying and fasting.
- that is what he is saying in Joshua 1:8. “. . . *then you will be prosperous and successful . . .*” “I don’t know about you, but I want to be successful as a father; I want to be successful in business or ministry; I want to be successful in my marriage. This works whether you are in the ministry, are single or married, whether you sell gasoline or toilets—no matter what you do, it works!
- “. . . *don’t let it depart from your mouth . . .*” talk about it. Say it continually. “*Meditate on*

The Hebrew word translated *meditate*, also carries the thought, *to mutter*. Mutter it. Speak it to yourself.

Just lie on your bed and mutter the Word. Just say the Word to yourself—over and over, again. To meditate is to think deeply about something—to think intently and at length.

Another translation of Joshua 1:8 reads like this on the last phrase: “. . . *you shall be able to deal wisely in all the affairs of life.*” You could not have good success if you did not know how to deal wisely in the affairs of life.

Why would you know how to deal wisely in the affairs of life? Because you meditated in the Word of God and walked in the light of the Word.

**Practicing the Word:** Practicing the Word means just that . . . putting it to work—doing it—being a “doer” of the Word. James 1:22 says, “*Do not merely listen to the word—letting it go in one ear and out the other, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says—act on what you read.*”

The Church has many “talkers of the Word,” and even many “rejoicers about the Word,” but we don’t have enough “doers of the Word.”

Begin the practice of doing, in every circumstance, what the Word tells you to do.

As an example: Philippians 4:6 says,

*“Do not be anxious about anything—don’t fret or worry or have any anxiety about anything, but instead of worrying, pray—in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns—in every circumstance, pray. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*”

So do that!

We don't mind practicing part of this verse—the part that says to pray. But if you practice just that part and not the first part, you are not practicing the Word—you are not a doer of the Word.

The *Amplified* translation begins, “*Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything . . .*” First we are told not to fret. If you are going to fret and have anxieties, it will do no good to make requests. That kind of praying does not work. An over-anxious prayer full of fretfulness does not work.

It is not a matter of having a lot of faith, but a matter of endeavoring to practice the Word. If you practice the Word, your faith will be built up. Read the verse out loud. Tell the Lord that his Word is true and that you believe it.

Sure, you may be pressured and tempted to say that you can't help worrying and fretting. But God has never asked us to do anything that we are unable to do. When God said not to worry—that means we can stop worrying. God is just and he will never ask us to do something we are unable to do.

I understand that it is possible to become so fretful and full of worry over something that you can't sleep or eat. But all you have to do is practice the Word and you will get results.

As a result of practicing Philippians 4:6, Philippians 4:7 says,

*“Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life—the peace of God—that tranquil which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Everybody wants what verse 7 talks about—but they don't want to practice what the 6<sup>th</sup> verse says we have to do to get it. The *Amplified* translation says, “*And God’s peace . . . which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*” God's peace will keep guard over your heart and mind.

But you can't reap these results and have this peace without applying what verse 6, says.

The 6<sup>th</sup> verse tells us not to fret and worry. People who worry and fret, continually think on the wrong side of life. Again, it is an uncontrolled and undisciplined mind. Verse 8 tells us what we are to think about:

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. —Philippians 4:8 NIV*

*Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious--the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. —Philippians 4:8 MSG*

*For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence and is honorable and seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely and lovable, whatever is kind and winsome and gracious, if there is any virtue and excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on and weigh and take account of these things [fix your minds on them]. —Philippians 4:8 AMP*

*And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. —Philippians 4:8 NLT*

*DO* verse 8. *Practice* this verse. Think about the right things. Many people think about the wrong things and you know because of what they talk about. The Bible say, “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” Listen to their conversations.

If something does not meet all of these qualifications—true, honest, honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report—do not think about it and do not talk about it!

The *Amplified* translation of I Corinthians 13:7 reads, “*Love . . . is ever ready to believe the best of every person.*” I have found through the years that most of the stories I have heard about people do not even meet the first qualification. They are not even true. So don't continue to spread the stories—the rumor and gossip about people—I don't care who they are. Don't even think about them. Some things you hear might be true—but are they pure and lovely, and notice this, are they praiseworthy? So don't even think about them.

If the stories you hear aren't true; noble; right; pure; lovely; admirable; excellent; praiseworthy; reputable; authentic; compelling; gracious—the best, not the worst; worthy of reverence; honorable and seemly; just; lovely and lovable; kind and winsome and gracious; virtuous; excellent . . . you get the idea.

Whenever we think about the negative things, we give place to the devil. His greatest weapon is the power of suggestion—remember TIS . . . Thoughts, Idea, Suggestions—He is always endeavoring to enter you thought life. That is why we are told in God's Word to, . . . *think on these things.*”

So meditate on God's Word and endeavor to do what you read.

**Give the Word First Place:** The training, the developing, the educating of our spirits comes by giving the Word of God first place in our lives.

*My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words—tune your ears to my voice. Do not let me words out of your sight—keep my message in plain view at all times, keep them in the center of your heart—concentrate! Learn it by heart—let them penetrate deep within your heart, for they are life to those who find them and health to a man’s whole body. Those who discover these words live, really live; body and soul, they’re bursting with health! —Proverbs 4:20-22*

God says in this passage, “Attend to my words—give heed to them—put them first: incline your ear—listen to what I have to say—Keep looking at the Word of God. Keep my words in your heart . . .”

There are rich dividends for doing this. Why is it that God tells us to put his Words first, and to listen to what he has to say, to keep looking at his Word, and to keep his Word in our heart? Because “. . . his Words are LIFE to those who find them, and HEALTH to all their flesh.”

The margin of the King James says the word translated *health* is the Hebrew word for *medicine*. His Words are, “medicine to all their flesh.” There is healing in the Word.

Most of us get sick, go to the doctor or the hospital, and afterward ask for prayer. I’m not saying that it is wrong to have a doctor, certainly not. I believe strongly in hospitals and doctors. Thank God for them. But I am saying, why not put God’s Word first. Sometimes as a last resort, we turn to the Word.

Think of King Asa . . . his story is found in II Chronicles 16:12:

*In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians.*

He gets some disease in his feet and instead of seeking the Lord, he went to the physicians and he died. The verse isn’t implying that he died *because* he went to the physician, no, it implies that he should have sought the Lord first.

We need to train ourselves to ask, in every circumstance, “What does God’s Word have to say about this?” We should ask ourselves what God has to say about anything that may come up in our life—and then put the Word first.

Sometimes family and friends will try to rush you into things—but you need to think about what the Word of God says.

**Instantly Obey the Voice of Your Spirit:** As I have said over and over, your spirit has a voice. That voice is called *conscience*. Sometimes we call it *intuition*, an *inner voice*, or

*guidance*. The world calls it a *hunch*. But what it is, is your spirit speaking to you. Every man's spirit—saved or unsaved, has a voice.

The human spirit, as we have seen in previous chapters, is a spiritual man, a spirit man, an inward hidden man. He is hidden to the physical senses. You cannot see him or touch him. This is the man who has become a new creature in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). When a man is born again, his spirit becomes a new spirit.

God prophesied through both Ezekiel and Jeremiah that a time would come when he would take the old stony heart out of men and put in a new one. He said that he would put his spirit into us. Under the New Covenant, this new birth became available.

As you give this newborn spirit the privilege of meditating on the Word of God, this becomes the source of its information. Your spirit will become strong and the inward voice of your conscience, educated in the spirit, will become a true guide.

Did you notice that meditation in the Word, practicing the Word, giving the Word first place, all come before obeying your spirit? You see, if your spirit has had the privilege of meditating in the Word, of practicing the Word, of putting the Word first—then your spirit is an authoritative guide.

Learn to obey the voice of your spirit.

If you are not used to doing that, of course, you will not get there overnight. As I have said, your spirit can be built up and strengthened. Your spirit can be educated as your mind can be educated. But just as you did not begin school in the first grade one week and graduate from the twelfth grade the next week, your spirit will not be educated and trained overnight.

If we follow these four points and practice them, however, after a while we can know the will of God the Father even in minor details of life. You will receive guidance and will always instantly get either a *yes* or a *no*. You will know in your spirit what you should do—in every situation and circumstance of life.

## Praying With the Spirit

I Corinthians 14:14-15

*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.*

One of the greatest spiritual exercises there is, is to pray in tongues every single day. Your spirit then is in direct contact with the Father of spirits.

*For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. —I Corinthians 14:2*

It is your spirit praying when you pray in tongues—the Holy Ghost gives the utterance, but it is your spirit praying. Paul said, “*For if I pray in a tongue—an unknown tongue—my spirit prays . . .*”

I have tried to follow the policy of doing a lot of praying in tongues daily. It keeps my spirit in contact with the Father of spirits. It helps me become more spirit-conscious.

When you pray in tongues, your mind grows quiet—because you are not praying out of your mind. And once your mind is quiet, you become more conscious of your own spirit, and of spiritual things.

Get out of the sense realm. Get out of the flesh realm. Get out of the human reasoning realm.

Get over into the faith realm and into the spirit realm. Faith is of the spirit—and *that's where the great things happen!*