

Are You Spirit-Led or Cause-Driven? 8 Ways to Tell

Our souls seem easily captivated by causes that grip us and then drive us. Perhaps that is why the LORD spoke clearly to me on Dec. 6, 1998, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, when He was launching me into the task of sharing what He had taught me through decades of higher education, research and experience about biblical womanhood and biblical equality. He said, "The cause is not the call." When I asked, "What, then, is 'the call'?" I believe He directed me to John 17:3, which says:

And this is eternal life: [it means] to know (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand) You, the only true and real God, and [likewise] to know Him, Jesus [as the] Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), Whom You have sent (Amplified).

THE CALL is to HIM, TO KNOW HIM. And we do this by spending time reading The Bible and by giving undivided attention to His leading in daily life. Then, out of this "knowing Him," we find that He may "tap us on the shoulder," asking us to do something for Him, something that is close to His heart.

With it comes His compassion because He cares about His creation, and especially about His children. In addition to the compassion that accompanies a commission from the LORD comes a strong, lasting motivation because God's "causes" come with amazing, inherent power, simply because they come from God Himself. Because of that inherent draw and power, a God-given cause can easily capture our attention and drive our ambition. It can easily become the all-consuming, driving force of our life.

It can easily become our "god," displacing the God who trusted us with a task. In my case, the LORD's clear commission,

education and specific directives have made me sensitive to several things, including the fact that the gospel is NOT synonymous with "Liberation Theology" nor with the "Social Justice Movement." Rather, the biblical womanhood teachings of Jesus are an integral part of His Message.

That is where they must remain. In context. Pure. Untainted by socio-political and socio-economic forces. Biblical womanhood teachings must be advanced under the scrutiny of His Spirit and executed with His Wisdom. Even the slightest deviation from this pollutes the Message of Jesus. Here's a tidbit for further thought. The gospel is a Holy Spirit-empowered Message with action directed "from Above."

Liberation theology and the Social Justice Movement have a different point of origin, with their action being directed "from Below." Although the human motives of these movements may be noble, they cannot come close to the motives and mind of an all-knowing Creator. They can help to some extent for a season, but ultimately they cannot eliminate the distress and disaster in the multicultural soup of sinful humanity.

Only God can do that because only God can change individual hearts, and thereby the corporate heart of any culture or social unit. Out of the heart are the issues of life.

I have found Jesus' words in John 8:23 to be helpful in distinguishing between that which originates "from above" with Him and that which originates "from below" with humanity: "He said to them, 'You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.'"

Briefly, another point is this. Over the years, through extensive research and observation, I've noticed that cause-driven individuals, no matter how sincere and compassionate, have veered from Biblical truth. But through faithfulness to Scripture and responsiveness to the leading of the Holy Spirit—not driven by purpose or cause—each of us can do our

small part in God's Big Plan.

Here are eight questions we can ask ourselves as we evaluate whether we are Spirit-led or cause-driven.

1. What is our starting point? Do we extract our understanding of Jesus and how He conducted Himself from accurate reading of Scripture? Or do we begin with a cause and then impose a sociopolitical, socioeconomic, or socioreligious image on Him?
2. Is our identity with Jesus first and foremost, or do we actually find our identity in a cause?
3. Is our sense of destiny on earth determined by the cause, or by God's bigger plan in which He allows us a part?
4. Are we investing more in our relationship with the Lord or in advancing the cause?
5. Do our choices advance God and His agenda or are we using the cause for personal advancement?
6. Do our choices put the focus on the Lord or are we using the cause to make us feel important?
7. Do we devote our time, talent and treasure to the Lord or to the cause? In other words, who or what do we worship, in fact?
8. The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit always agree. With that in mind, do we stay with God's Word, or do we corrupt it by imposing on it—or dressing it up with—the latest psychological, philosophical, political, sociological theories and popular trends?

My prayer is this:

God, have mercy on us [because we know we need it], and bless us [because unless you bless us, we have nothing to give], and give us favor where we need it to accomplish Your plan

[because you have not called us to politick our way to influence], and this is so that YOUR WAYS may be known to us and through us on earth and YOUR SALVATION among all nations (author's paraphrase of Psalm 67:1-2). Amen.

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