

How You Will Know if the Holy Spirit Is Truly Guiding You

It's important to regularly ask, "Is God truly guiding me?" "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye on you" (Ps. 32:8).

The inner promptings of the Holy Spirit are like gauges in an airplane—if the pilot ignores them, he'll miss his destination.

The conviction of the Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift from God—listen to it. I often hear people say, "God is leading me to do this or that," and all too often, they find that they made a very poor decision. What happened? The Holy Spirit didn't lead them; human nature and emotions did.

Many jump into a dating relationship or marriage, buy an expensive vehicle or recreational toy, or charge thousands of dollars on credit, believing that God's Spirit is leading them. I'm amazed at the number of people who don't help those in need, budget their income or make smart financial decisions, and still think that they are using wisdom in the area of finances.

I'm equally alarmed at the number of couples who are convinced that God is leading them toward marriage, yet they engage in premarital sex and are considering living together before marriage. Let me be clear: God directs us to make "wise" decisions that correspond with His Word. Disobedience leads to disappointment. That's why it's always sensible to ask, "Is God truly guiding me?" before making an important decision.

Furthermore, if you're not in the Word, the Word won't be in you. One of the best ways to know if God is truly guiding you is to stay and obey—stay in His Word; obey His principles. "God is more likely to direct me through wise teaching than

through inner voices” (J.I. Packer).

Compare your “feelings” to the Word. “The heart is more deceitful than all things and desperately wicked; who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9). Feelings shouldn’t lead but follow. Although feelings can be good and God-ordained—I thank God for the love that I feel toward God and my family—when it comes to making decisions, we shouldn’t interpret the Scriptures in the light of our feelings, but rather interpret our feelings through the light of Scripture.

How do we evaluate motives? Here are just a few helpful questions: Would you go on a mission trip, visit the elderly, donate money or help the homeless even if no one knew? Would you sing on the praise and worship team if you had to sing from the back and not from center stage? Would you be in leadership if you were not recognized and applauded for your efforts?

I’ve found that God doesn’t always answer yes or no to questions that don’t require an immediate response. He tells us to wait. It’s in this waiting period that we develop patience and trust. His leading isn’t a reckless course of action; it’s a well-designed plan that often takes time to unfold.

However, it’s incredibly difficult to hear from God if we’re actively engaging in sin. Sin means to miss the mark. We can’t be on target in the center of God’s will if we’re continually missing the mark. It’s like trying to hit a bull’s-eye with a bent arrow. It doesn’t matter how attractive the sin is, or how good it makes you feel, remove it from your life.

Remember, biblical principles do not change with the times.
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