

Tuning to the Impulse of the Spirit

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. **—Romans 14:19**

When we speak of the impulse of the Spirit, we are in some sense talking about feelings. I admit this is dangerous, because feelings can lead people to do strange things. This impulse may take the form of an insight that is based upon accumulated knowledge. It may be a suspicion that is based upon knowledge experienced. But the impulse of the Spirit, when obeyed, always leads to a feeling of immense peace.

One of the most helpful verses in this connection is Romans 14:19. The proof that the impulse of the Spirit lies behind our feeling that we ought to do something is the peace that obedience brings. This verse applies not only to a situation where tensions among people need to be defused, but also to our own inmost feelings. God will never lead us to do what violates our conscience. When I am really following Him, I will have an inner peace that testifies to the fact that I have been true to myself. When heaviness or a feeling of oppression exists, I know that impulse was not from God.

God wants to communicate with us not just at an intellectual level. But God wants to communicate with our whole being—our emotions and senses as well as our minds.

We are to use our minds, yes, but we must also be careful not to quench the Spirit. We are to be harmonious, whole, and balanced people.

Excerpted from *Worshipping God* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2004).