

Being Led by the Spirit

What does it mean to be led by the Holy Spirit? Some may refer to it as being filled with ... or sensitive to ... or anointed by the Spirit. It probably sounds really spiritual. But being led by the Spirit is actually a very practical part of living the Christian life. Simply put, to be led by the Holy Spirit just means to be obedient to Him.

The Holy Spirit does such awesome, yet practical work in the lives of God's children. He is our comforter, counselor, helper, intercessor, advocate, strengthener and standby. He teaches us and guides us into truth—and He even brings the things we learn back to our remembrance as we need it.

And the best part of it all is that He *lives* in each of us. Ephesians 3:16 tells us that He enables us to be “strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality]” (AMP).

He comes to live in our hearts when we're born again, and then He teaches and guides us according to God's plan and purpose for us. One of the ways He does this is by convicting us of the sins in our life. Much like a child does, as Christians, we learn what's right and wrong as we grow in our faith. We may get by with things that are not right for awhile, but the time comes when we need to grow. I remember when I would go to church every Sunday and then spend most of the afternoon gossiping about the pastor or whatever I didn't like about the service.

Of course, I was not a very happy Christian during that time. And I couldn't have been a very good example of one to others either. Critical and judgmental attitudes like that, or murmuring, being unthankful and complaining hinder our relationship with God and our representation of what a

Christian is.

But eventually, I began to get this nagging, uneasy feeling every time I would say something negative about the pastor—or anyone else for that matter. I could feel that what I was saying was wrong, and I knew in my heart it was the Holy Spirit telling me it was time to grow up and mature spiritually.

Now, I am immediately aware when I say or do something that is not pleasing to God. And this is what He wants for all His children: to develop sensitivity and obedience to His voice as He leads and guides each of our lives. Romans 8:14 declares that “all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.” This term *sons* indicates a level of maturity and intimacy in our relationship with Him.

God is not looking for spiritual robots; He wants *sons*. He doesn't want us all just following a bunch of rules for the sake of obedience. In the Old Testament, we read about the Old Covenant, and there were all kinds of rules to follow and sacrifices to make for sin. However, under this covenant, the people's sins were only “covered” for awhile. In the New Covenant, which Jesus provided through His perfect sacrifice, our sin is completely washed away and removed from us. So we are free to obey God simply because we love Him and we know that everything He tells us to do, or not do, is for our good. It's no longer about a long list of rules and regulations; but following the Holy Spirit. We just need to learn to follow His lead.

It's rather exciting to follow the Holy Spirit. I can tell you that life will never be boring with Him in the lead. When I first met Dave, I never would've thought God was *leading* him to me! But he had been praying for a wife—and particularly someone who needed help.

He came to the house one day to visit a friend of his who

lived upstairs from us. I was outside washing my car. So he said, "When you finish that one, you want to wash mine?" I sharply answered, "If you want your car washed you can just wash it yourself!" It *had* to be the Holy Spirit leading him, because he says that's when he thought, "*That's the girl for me!*" We went on five dates and got married—and the rest is history!

Now, everyone's story is different but the point is the Holy Spirit wants to lead us all according to the plans God has for each of our lives. I'm not saying it will always be easy. King David was called a man after God's heart, but we all know it wasn't because he did everything right. However, David had cultivated a passionate heart for God's will. He learned how to recover from his failures and move on in God, and because of that he earned the Lord's tribute: "I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do" (Acts 13:22, NIV).

Our part is to pray, study God's Word and learn to develop our own sensitivity and obedience to the Holy Spirit's lead. His promise to us is, "I will give them one heart [a new heart] and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony [unnaturally hardened] heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh [sensitive and responsive to the touch of their God]" (Ezekiel 11:19, AMP).

Trust the Holy Spirit in you—He knows what's best. Let your adventure begin!

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