

James Goll: How Spiritually Sensitive Are You?

When we say someone is “sensitive,” what do we mean?

In many cases, it means that we have to walk on eggshells around that person, right? We don’t want to upset a sensitive person because of the potential fallout.

In a positive sense, though, it can mean that the person’s sensibilities are fine-tuned to pick up little environmental clues and subtle influences that help this individual navigate through life and relate to others.

Extra-sensitive people are “feelers,” and their antennae are always ready to receive signals.

Without thinking about it, they will walk into a room and pick up the atmosphere, and their mood may be affected by it.

Their sensitivity may present certain challenges.

They may struggle with fearfulness, worry, or information overload, and they may be told to stop carrying the burdens of others so much. “Stop borrowing trouble; you’re too sympathetic,” people may urge them.

While feelers may overthink and overreact to certain circumstances and situations, they also tend to have good intuition about what to do, or what to avoid doing.

They may be quite creative, able to interpret their feelings via music, art or writing.

I’m describing a “born feeler.”

When you add the Holy Spirit to the equation, you have a “born-again feeler,” a Spirit-filled feeler.

This person can sense God's direction as well as pick up information from the environment.

A mature feeler has learned how to be appropriately responsive to the needs of others as well as attentive to the often-subtle direction of the Holy Spirit, which is the most important part of being a Spirit-filled feeler.

If you were born sensitive, your psyche may "bruise" easily. You may find that you are frequently offended and easily hurt.

As you mature, your sensibilities need to be reeducated by the Holy Spirit, so you can forgive personal affronts, stop nursing injured feelings and allow your gift of sensitivity to be converted for the Master's use.

In short, our Father God wants to help all of us, whether we consider ourselves sensitive or not, to grow and mature in our emotional responsiveness.

He gave us our emotions, our feelings, our sensitivity and our senses so we could better hear Him and follow His direction.

Our feelings are part of our relationships on many levels, including our relationship with Him and our many relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ and, of course, our natural family members.

These feelings also contribute to our ability to reach out to strangers and form new relationships.

How Spiritually Sensitive Are You?

Anyone can be as close to God as they desire to be.

I believe that our natural sensitivity can certainly be a useful tool for discerning the ministry and movement of the Holy Spirit.

But our lack of natural sensitivity doesn't necessarily limit

your supernatural capacity to move in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture warns us against grieving the ever-sensitive Holy Spirit: "And do not grieve [or insult] the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30a). The idea of "grieving" the Spirit covers many negatives.

The Word says, "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19), and "Do not lie to the Spirit" (see Acts 5:3). Not only does the Bible make clear that we should not be ignorant of the Spirit of God (see 1 Cor. 12:1), but—stern warning here—it tells us, "Do not blaspheme against the Holy Spirit" (see, for example, Matt. 12:31).

In glorious contrast, the Word urges us to be eager to invite the Holy Spirit into our lives.

However, this means more than inviting Him to be our holy guest, because He owns the whole house!

We must be quick to say, "Holy Spirit, You are welcome in my life. Help Yourself to anything. I give You complete liberty."

Just look at all these biblical invitations to submit and consent to the rulership of the Spirit of God:

- Seek Him. (See Deut. 4:29, Luke 12:31.)
- Honor Him. (See 1 Sam. 2:30, 1 Cor. 6:20.)
- Give Him free rein in your life. (See Job 22:21, James 4:7.)
- Be born of the Spirit. (See Ezek. 36:25-27, John 3:5.)
- Receive the Holy Spirit. (See John 20:22.)
- Worship in the Spirit. (See John 4:24.)
- Serve others in obedience to the Spirit. (See 1 Cor. 12:7.)

- Be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (See Matt. 3:11, Acts 11:16.)
- Be continuously filled with the Spirit. (See John 14:16-17, Eph. 5:18.)
- Be led by the Spirit. (See Rom. 8:14, Gal. 5:18.)
- Pray in the Spirit. (See Eph. 6:18, Jude 1:20.)
- Hear the Spirit. (See John 8:47.)
- Walk in the Spirit. (See Gal. 5:16, Eph. 5:8.)

Where the Holy Spirit is concerned, entering into the feeler realm should not be a rare experience reserved for only a special few—it is accessible for every believer who seeks His presence.

What if you were to seek Him more earnestly? What if you changed your assumptions and expected a little more heaven on earth when you prayed?

Avoid the instability of walking by your feelings or emotions alone, and instead walk by spiritual sight, shining the light of the Word on your path. (See Ps. 119:105.) Put your heart into your search as you pray the Word.

Take time to discover what you can do to please the Lord.

Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, “Find out what pleases the Lord” (Eph. 5:10, NIV). It’s an adventure you don’t want to miss. No one automatically knows what pleases the Lord, but He will guide our search when we genuinely seek Him. We can learn to tune in with our senses and be open to His.

Seek Him. Exercise your senses. Undertake your search with a sense of purpose.

Expect to feel, hear and see the Spirit as He responds to your invitation. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the

Godhead, and He has an exquisitely sensitive personality.

He is not an “it.” Seek Him out, and learn to cultivate intimacy with Him; you will never regret the effort.

As we integrate the diverse dimensions of sensitivity into our lives, we can learn to be tender and sensitive, living from our hearts instead of responding only in a cerebral or compartmentalized way.

With the Holy Spirit in control, we can be more caring toward others and better at communicating with people.

For all our lives, we can continue to grow in our revelation about the nature of the Holy Spirit, embracing His sensitivity.

Remember, the depth of our hunger is the length of our reach to God. Hunger attracts the Holy Spirit of God!

Prayer of a Passionate Heart

Father, because of Jesus and Your Spirit, I love You. I present myself to You and bring You my personality, my unique sensitivity level and my weaknesses. May Your Holy Spirit descend and remain upon my life as He did with Jesus. Fill me. Shape me. Use me. Give me a heart of tenderness for Your kingdom's sake. Mold me to suit Your will and Your ways. You are the potter, and I am the clay—fashion me to Your liking. I want to do only what is pleasing in Your sight, from this time forward. Amen and amen! {eo}

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