

Learning How to Be Led By the Holy 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 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 (MEV) tells us that He enables us to be "...strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man."

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, and 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 up. I remember when I would go to church every Sunday and then gossip 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 each of our lives. Romans 8:14 (MEV) declares that “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these 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. Jesus made a way, through His perfect sacrifice, for our sins to be completely washed away and removed from us so we can have a personal relationship with God. We are free to obey Him simply because we love Him and we know that everything He tells us to do, or not do, is for our good. We just need to learn to follow His lead.

It's actually 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 my husband, 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 and he said, “When you finish that one, you want to wash mine?” My response was, “If you want your car washed, you can 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!*”

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 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 "God testified concerning him: 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do fulfill my entire will'" (Acts 13:22, MEV).

In our relationship with God, our part is to pray, study His 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 and I will put a new spirit within them. And I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 11:19, MEV).

Trust the Holy Spirit and follow His lead. You'll discover His way is the best, most exciting journey you can find! {eoa}