

Pleasing God First

Following the Holy Spirit's leading can break the tyranny of people-pleasing

Do you make your own decisions? Or are you a people pleaser, allowing others to make decisions for you?

When I started in ministry, I had to decide if I was going to follow my heart or give in to the resistance and discouragement coming at me from other people who didn't think I should do that. By God's grace, I decided to step out in faith and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. But it wasn't easy. A lot of my family turned against me, I lost most of my friends, I was asked to leave my church ... it was a terrible time!

It was also a confusing time. I was just trying to do what I believed God was telling me to do and be what He was calling me to be—that was my sole motive.

It was a tough beginning, and there have been other challenges along the way, but I've never regretted being obedient to God. See, it would have been harder to miss God's will and live an unfulfilled life than to face the struggles and live with the peace and joy I have now.

The key was learning how to follow God rather than the tyranny of being a people-pleaser.

Whose Expectations Are You Living Up To?

Every person in your life has some kind of expectation of you. Making decisions based only on what they want you to do will just lead to frustration. But if you follow the leadership of God, you will have peace, joy and righteousness that His kingdom offers (Rom. 14:17). You also won't be frustrated all the time because God never leads us to do so many things that

we become stressed out and can't enjoy anything we're doing.

The key to living without stress and having this life of peace and joy is learning how to hear from God, to do what He tells you to do, and to not give in to the pressures of other people's expectations.

God has a plan and you are part of that plan, but you won't live it out if you live with the fear of man and don't confidently believe you can hear from God and know what His plan is.

If you are a born-again Christian, you have a blood-bought, God-given right to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The anointing—the presence and power of God—abides in us and teaches us how to live. It's the anointing that causes us to desire what God wants.

God Is Speaking ... Are You Listening?

First John 2:27 says, "But as for you, the anointing (the sacred appointment, the unction) which you received from Him abides [permanently] in you; [so] then you have no need that anyone should instruct you. But just as His anointing teaches you concerning everything and is true and is no falsehood, so you must abide in (live in, never depart from) Him [being rooted in Him, knit to Him], just as [His anointing] has taught you [to do]" (AMP).

This Scripture is not saying it's OK to be disrespectful of others or rebel against authority. It's telling us we can hear God's voice personally and follow what He is leading us to do. You can have confidence that God speaks to you!

The more you grow in God, the more you will know His will, what He likes and what He doesn't like. You won't have to be told what to do all the time because you'll just know what God wants. A good example of this is how children get more freedom and privileges as they mature. My adult children have more

liberty to do things and make their own choices now than when they were young.

As we are led by the Holy Spirit, we will have more freedom as well, and we won't live just trying to keep people happy all the time. We can ask God what He wants us to do each day and then help others as He leads us, fulfilling His plans for our lives. We can choose to be led by God!

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times best-selling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored nearly 100 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *Do Yourself a Favor ... Forgive* (Hachette). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit [. To read past columns in Charisma by Joyce, visit \[.\]\(#\)](#)