

## **On Being Led by the Spirit**

If prayer is the most puzzling part of our relationship to Christ, guidance is probably the most problematical. How does one ever really know if one is in the will of God? But, if it is problematical for most Christians, it is literally agonizing for a great many. Shall I marry this person? Move to that town? Take this job? How does one ever really know? How does one come to peace about it? Much of the answer to this dilemma is rooted in one's understanding of the nature of our being; and the nature of our relationship to Christ. Getting guidance from God is not like punching the keys of a computer. A certain continuous relationship must be established with Christ, in order for one to interact with Him in life direction and purpose. Many Christians live, pretty much, in the flesh—doing whatever they want. And then they scramble about for some “signs from heaven,” when confronted with hard decisions. Consulting God only when it suits one's fancy to do so, is like consulting the stars. It is a matter of chance. There is really little basis for understanding what God wants, even if He were to speak to them. The mind can become so cluttered with the sounds and misconceptions of the world, as to make it quite difficult to sense the Spirit of God, who tends to speak to us in the “still, small voice.” God does not make a habit of shouting at us through the barriers of world cacophony. Satan tries to make such a din that the believer cannot hear the voice of God.

So guidance, then, is not a matter of pausing, occasionally, to punch the “celestial computer.” It is rather the cultivating of the true nature of our being, so as to establish communion between ourselves and the Spirit of God.

### **The Nature of Our Being**

Actually we have two natures—the spirit and the flesh, or as Paul calls them, “the spiritual man,” and “the natural man.” The natural self, which is the human mind and personality, is often in conflict with the spiritual self. As Paul has said, “*The flesh lusteth [has its desires] against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*” (Galatians 5:17). Paul also said, “*In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing...*” (Romans 7:18).

Thus, we conclude, with these, and many more texts, that we are of a dual nature, and that we cannot depend on the flesh at all, for sound desires, or sound judgment. To use the natural mind, alone, as the source of our decisions, can be quite disastrous. Nor can we rely on feelings, however spiritual they may seem, because emotions, too, are a function of the natural mind.

*Then what is the difference between fleshly feelings and spiritual feelings?*

Actually there are no human emotions in the spirit. The Holy Spirit brings truth to our spirits, and the human mind responds to the Spirit with its own emotional mechanisms.

*But isn't that splitting hairs?*

No, indeed. There is a great difference between human emotions, and the inner communications of the spirit. The Holy Spirit often urges us to make decisions contrary to our emotions. Emotions are impulses that travel along the nerve

paths in accordance with the natural patterns that are established on the cortex of the brain, as a result of hereditary and environmental factors. (Please see author's work, *"On Making It Through"*). Sometimes these emotions are quite uncontrollable, and often contrary to reality. They are totally undependable as a basis of sound decision-making.

On the other hand, what we call reason is also undependable, because it is based on the data accumulated in the brain, which data may be faulty. So then, as far as our human nature is concerned, the mind is undependable as a source of guidance because of unreliable emotions, and inaccurate thought processes.

*Well then, how can we ever depend on our decision making?*

We can't, if it is in the flesh. But, we can depend on the Holy Spirit to direct our minds, as we make our decisions.

*But how can we know if it is the Holy Spirit directing us, and not our human minds?*

How do the sheep know the voice of the shepherd? By listening to Him day by day. If we tune our spirits to hear Christ, our minds will get the message. But if, instead, we keep cluttering our minds with the sounds of this world, and listen more to them than to Christ, we are likely to make unsound decisions. What is it you pay most attention to? That will determine your sensitivity to Christ.

The first step in being led by the Spirit is to recognize this dual factor, and to function accordingly. To be in a position to be led by the Spirit, means to cultivate the spiritual sensitivities.

*And how does one do that?*

The spirit is nourished by attending to those things that pertain to our relationship to Christ. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd, because they hear him day by day. Prayer, attendance to the Word of God, fellowship with other believers—these are the things that help to nourish the spirit. But, sensitivity to the Spirit is dulled, or shut out, by the cacophony, and the clutter, of things of this world. It is not that interest in the world will cause one to lose one's salvation, but that it may make it difficult to be led by the Spirit. A vicious cycle develops so quickly—undue attendance to the world, dulls the sensitivities to Christ, which in turn escalates interest in the world.

Our true nature is spirit. The flesh is only a temporary vessel, exposed to the battering of the world. The spirit is the vital issue. Focus on the vessel—earthly comfort and bliss—can only bring grief and disappointment. The first step, then, in being led by the Spirit, is to recognize the priorities of the Spirit—to want what Christ wants in your life. He will see to it that you have what He wants for you. He will do whatever is necessary to lead you in that direction.

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*"Part II - What is the Nature of Our Relationship to Christ"*

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