

# How to be Led by the Holy Spirit, Part 2

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(Continued from last month)

**Romans 8:14 (NKJV) “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”**

The first and most important way we receive guidance from God is through the Scriptures—the Bible, God’s written Word. Often we ask God for guidance but refuse to read and obey His Word. Why should God give us additional guidance when we aren’t applying what He has already given us? Psalm 119:105 states that the Word of God is a light to our pathway. Through the light of Scripture, we are able to discern the will of God. God will never lead us contrary to His Word.

Many people have a difficult time discerning whether they are receiving guidance from God, their own flesh, or the devil. Many claim to be led by God when what they are doing is clearly contrary to the Scripture. Why is this? It is because of the subjective and deceptive nature of feelings, desires, false doctrines, human reasoning, and supernatural manifestations. None of us is qualified to discern God’s will within ourselves apart from the Word of God. Only the Word of God has the power to cut through the jungle of deception and confusion to open up a clear pathway into God’s will: *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV)

As human beings, we are easily deceived and led astray. Because we are also proud, we fail to recognize our vulnerability and thus live in denial or even open opposition to God’s will. We are no match for the devil’s tricks. That is why God has given us His Word—to protect us from falling prey to the devil. In two different letters, Paul warns Timothy, the pastor of Ephesus, not to allow deception to enter the church. 1 Timothy 1:3–5 (NKJV) says, *“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. 5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.”* 2 Timothy 4:1–4 (NKJV) *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”*

Not only can the Word of God protect us from deception by exposing the devil’s lies, but it will enable us to prove the will of God. Romans 12:2 (NKJV) says, *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* By reading, studying, and obeying the Word of God, our minds can be transformed from wrong patterns of thinking so that we can discern the “good, acceptable, and the perfect” will of God. The will of God is “good”—meaning it is morally virtuous. The will of God is also “acceptable”—meaning it is divinely pleasing. The will of God is “perfect”—meaning it is spiritually mature. Oh, there is such a great need today for people to renew their minds to the Word of God!

Jesus gave us a living example of how each of us must rely on the Word of God to overcome the devil’s lies. When in the wilderness and faced with the devil’s temptations and false guidance, Jesus did not rely upon His own intuition, but completely relied on the Word of God by saying, “Satan, it is written!” Jesus used the Word of God every time! I am convinced that if believers would make the Word of God

final authority in their lives, they would receive all of the necessary guidance they need to live successful Christian lives even if they *never* received any other form of guidance. God's Word is sufficient, final, and authoritative!

The second most common way that God gives us guidance is through the "Inward Witness" or the "Witness of the Holy Spirit". The inward witness can be described as a "check", a "green light", "yellow light", a "red light", a "red flag", or a "peace in the Holy Spirit". In regard to the inward witness, consider the following Scriptures:

Romans 8:16 (NKJV) *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,"*

1 John 5:10 (NKJV) says, *"He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son."*

Colossians 3:15 (NKJV) *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful."* (i.e. let the peace of God "umpire" or determine the direction of your heart)

Psalms 18:28 (NKJV) *"For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness."*

How does the inward witness work? First, when a believer gives his or her life to Christ and is born again, God puts within them the "witness" of the Holy Spirit that brings a peace that confirms to their spirit that they are forgiven by God and are now His child. Anyone who has truly been born again has experienced this inward witness of the Holy Spirit.

In my own Christian life, I have found that the inward witness has been the chief way God has revealed His will to me in personal decisions. For instance, when I received my calling from God into the ministry, I knew nothing about being led by the Holy Spirit. However, as I grew closer to God, I became very aware of the leading of God inside of me that I could not shake. Even then, I wasn't sure it was God or me. It was such an important decision that I didn't want to make a mistake! Over time, I wrestled within myself. Finally I told the Lord that I did not know if it was His will for me to go into the ministry or not, but if it was His will, I would be *willing*. When I submitted myself to God's will whatever it was, suddenly the struggle ended and a peace of God flooded my soul. I got up from my knees convinced of God's will for my life. I have never looked back.

In the same way, it was through the inward witness that I knew it was God's will for me to become the pastor of the church where I now minister. It was also through the inward witness that I and the leadership of the church knew when it was time to relocate and build a new facility. The inward witness of the Holy Spirit is the most common way God will speak to you and me if we are willing to listen and do His will. In Part 3 we will explore other ways that God will guide us.

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