

How to be Led by the Holy Spirit, Part 4

The VISION Newsletter / July 2011

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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.”

In the previous three parts of this series, I shared six ways we can be led by the Holy Spirit. In this fourth and final part, I want to share four other ways we can be led by the Holy Spirit. The seventh way we can be led by the Holy Spirit is by praying in the Holy Spirit. Praying in the Holy Spirit is prayer that flows out of our human spirit by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament refers to it as “speaking with other tongues”. It is often referred to as a spiritual prayer language. Although speaking in tongues has received some negative attention by those who have misused it, we cannot ignore the fact that it is found and taught in the New Testament. For instance, Paul spoke in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18). It was he who said in 1 Corinthians 14:14–15 (NKJV), “*For if I pray in a tongue, **my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.***” He also said, “*For he who speaks in a tongue **does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.***” (1 Corinthians 14:2 NKJV) When we pray with our spirit with the help of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to understand spiritually the mysteries of God that we cannot comprehend in our natural mind.

The eighth way we can be led by the Holy Spirit is through prophecy. Prophecy is one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit whereby a person speaks under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in a known language. God often speaks to His people through the gift of prophecy, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge (Acts 21:4, 8-14) Unfortunately, some have hijacked the gift of prophecy by speaking presumptuously in the name of the Lord to win the hearts of those who are eager to hear it. Our reaction should not be to despise prophecy (1 Thessalonians 5:20), but for the church to test and judge the spirit and message of prophecy by the Word of God. A key principle for guidance through prophecy is this: Prophecy should only be *confirmational* rather than *directional*. Never allow yourself to be guided by prophecy that is unconfirmed by mature pastors and elders or the witness of the Holy Spirit. For instance, Paul received prophetic warnings about the dangers he would face in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14). This warning caused the believers to try convincing Paul to cancel his trip. However, Paul accepted the prophecy as confirmation of the danger he would face but he proceeded on his journey based on the guidance he had received personally from the Lord (Acts 20:23).

The ninth way we can be led by the Holy Spirit is through visions. Throughout the Bible God often guided His people through visions. In the Bible there are three types of visions. The first type is *spiritual visions*. Spiritual visions are not seen by everyone present. In Christ’s appearance to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-7; 22:9), everyone accompanying him saw the light and heard a sound, but Saul alone experienced a spiritual encounter with Jesus Christ.

The second type of vision is a *trance*. In a trance a person is caught up into another dimension and is not aware of where he or she is at that moment. The apostle Peter experience a trance in Acts 10:9–16 (NKJV): “*The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance 11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.’ And a*

voice spoke to him again the second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again."

The third type of vision is an *open vision*: In an open vision brings spiritual realities into the physical realm where they can be seen with eyes wide open. In Acts 10:1–7 we read of a Roman Centurion, Cornelius by name, who saw an open vision of an angel of God. As a result of this open vision, the angel gave him instructions on how he and his household could hear the Gospel of salvation.

The tenth way we can be led by the Holy Spirit is through dreams. Not every dream is from God but some are. The prophet Joel foretold that in the last days those upon whom the Holy Spirit would come would experience visions and dreams (Acts 2:17-18). According to Numbers 12:6, God said that He speaks to His prophets through dreams. In Matthew 2:20-24 Joseph received direction from God in a dream about the birth of Jesus and to keep Mary as his wife. Later Joseph received warning and guidance from God through another dream (Matthew 2:13). Job 33:15-18 gives us of the best reasons as to why God sometimes uses dreams to bring guidance into our lives: *"In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, ¹⁶ then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. ¹⁷ In order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man, ¹⁸ He keeps back his soul from the Pit, and his life from perishing by the sword."*

In this four part series I have shared with you ten ways that we can be led by the Holy Spirit. I want to remind you that the devil is out to deceive us by offering unbiblical ways to receiving direction for our lives. True guidance from God begins and ends by remaining true to God who gives guidance. To remain true to God means staying true to His Word, the Bible. The Bible alone is our objective source for discerning true guidance. Every other kind of guidance that I have mentioned is subjective in nature and can only be trusted when tested by the Bible.

On a practical level, our ability to be led by the Holy Spirit greatly depends upon training our spirit man (the inner spiritual part of us that communicates with God) to hear and discern God's voice. How can we train our spirit man? First, we must expect that God will guide us if we ask Him. Second, we must renew our thinking to line up with God's Word. Third, we must obey the guidance God gives us in His Word (If we will not follow the clear guidance found in His Word, why should He give you more?). Fourth, pray in the Holy Spirit. Fifth, practice the art of listening.

Don't be tricked or pressured into accepting false guidance. Be patient. Trust God to give you the guidance you need in the way you need it at the time you need it. Remember, those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God!

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