

## CHAPTER 18

### **HOW TO KNOW WHEN GOD'S SPIRIT IS LEADING YOU**

- I. In one of his recent "Personals" (May 1982 — page 26), Mr. Armstrong made a profound and stunning statement about God's Spirit.
  - A. He said, "Just receiving God's Spirit is not enough. One must be led by God's Spirit"
  - B. The implication of these words is clear and certain:
    1. God's Spirit must be active and flow in and out of our lives if we're to overcome and grow and qualify for His Kingdom
    2. If we don't use it, we'll lose it.
  - C. This brings us to an important question.
- II. Can you point to a specific instance in your life this past week when God's Spirit was leading you?
  - A. What about yesterday or today?
  - B. Can you isolate many such examples?
  - C. Are you sure?
- III. Suppose you think 5,000 thoughts a day!
  - A. How many of these are God inspired?
  - B. 3,000; 2,000; 1,000; 50?
  - C. Ideally, God should be in every thought — in every word, decision or action!
- IV. There are several scriptures which imply that God's Spirit should be in all our thoughts and guide our lives unceasingly.
  - A. Examples:
    1. Prov. 23:17 — "... be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."
    2. I Thess. 5:17: — "Pray without ceasing."
    3. II Cor. 10:5 — "... and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
- V. This now brings us to an important key scripture in Romans 8.
  - A. Rom. 8:14 — "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."
  - B. Clearly, we are to be led by God's Spirit.
  - C. But how can we know and be positively sure when it is?
  - D. What are the signs, guiding our lives?
    1. Does it lead through some type of "inner" voice?
    2. Does it lead through our emotions?
    3. Just how does it guide and direct us?
- VI. This evening I plan to answer the question: "How to know when God's Spirit is leading you!"
- VII. Exactly what is God's Spirit?
  - A. Turn to Acts 1:8 for a clue: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you...."
  - B. The Greek word for "power" is "dunamis" from which we get our English word "dynamo."
    1. God's Spirit, then, is His self-reproducing power — like a dynamo or generator that produces electricity.
    2. It is that invisible force which emanates from God — His inherent power or glory.
    3. It is His might, strength and awesome majesty.
    4. It is His life and energy.

- C. In a more specific sense it is:
1. The mind of God — His intellectual and mental faculties that govern His power.
  2. It is the consciousness of God; it is His emotional makeup and enthusiasm.
  3. It embodies all of His inner feelings, attitudes, attributes and qualities — it is His love, joy, holiness, virtue and nature.
  4. In a word, God's Spirit is His total character, personality and being.
- D. If it were possible to transplant your mind, life and personality into another person, he would have something of your spirit.
1. The same is true with God — His mind, nature, personality and character proceed from Him and are placed within you.
  2. Many scriptures prove that God's Spirit dwells within you as a begotten son.
  3. One good example is Romans 8:11 — "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

VIII. Before explaining how God's Spirit actually leads in everyday life, it is still yet necessary to note a few foundational principles about it.

- A. God's Spirit is omnipresent and permeates the entire universe.
1. Ps. 139:1-10 — These verses prove that God's Spirit is everywhere present.
  2. It radiates and flows mightily from Him filling the entirety of space.
- B. Its first action is to awaken our minds to God's existence and His majestic power.
1. Note the condition we were in before we were called:
  2. Eph. 2:1-3 — "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."
  3. So in his sinful and cut off state, man is dead in trespasses and sins.
  4. But Jesus Christ said that He would send the Holy Spirit into the world and that it would convict man of sin.
  5. John 16:7-8 — "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [margin says, convince or convict] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."
- C. It then calls us to God and opens our eyes to the truth.
1. John 6:44 — "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."
  2. Without the Holy Spirit working on man's mind, he would never seek for God naturally or of his own accord.
  3. The Bible says that many are called but few are chosen.
  4. What determines who God chooses?
    - a. There may be many factors.
    - b. But one of the clearest reasons is given in the parable of the sower and the seed.
    - c. Note Luke 8:11-15
    - d. Those chosen in this parable are those an "honest and good heart."
- D. It leads us on to full repentance and conversion.
1. Rom. 2:3-4 — "*And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and tolerance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*" (NOTE: Acts 11:18 proves that God grants repentance.)
  2. For some this process may take months or years.
  3. Cite the example of my own father-in-law who knew the truth for 30 years before being baptized.
- E. It begets us with God's own life and divine nature.
1. II Pet. 1:3-4 — "*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and*

godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

2. And again, read I John 5:11-12 — "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."
3. God's Spirit, then, impregnates us with the seed of eternal life.

#### IX. How then does God's Spirit lead us in practical, everyday experience?

A. How can we know and be positively sure?

B. Twelve methods:

1. It keeps us in tune with God's wavelength and interacts with our spirit.
  - a. Rom. 8:16 — "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."
  - b. Note further I John 3:24 — "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."
  - c. So God's Spirit dwells within us and communicates the knowledge, truth and confidence that we are His sons.
  - d. This contact with God should grow until it becomes constant and unceasing.
2. It imparts spiritual understanding and the ability to grasp the interrelationship of scriptures.
  - a. Read and expound I Corinthians 2:9-15.
  - b. The Holy Spirit, then, helps us to understand the Bible and its application to everyday life.
  - c. John 6:63 — "... the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."
3. It transmits the power to overcome and to mortify the deeds of the body.
  - a. Rom. 8:13 — "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."
  - b. No matter what your problem, no sin or weakness or temptation is beyond God's power to help you solve.
  - c. Cry out fervently and God will provide the immediate or necessary help you need.
4. It prompts us to do God's will in everyday experiences by impulse or desire.
  - a. Phil. 2:12-13 — "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Read article on "Sharing")
  - b. The impulse or motivation to live a godly and righteous life should increase as you walk closer to Him each day.
  - c. The flow of God's Spirit becomes stronger and more apparent as you strive to remove the hidden specks of sin.
5. It sharpens and intensifies our sense of awareness to sin, Satan and the world.
  - a. Paul said in II Corinthians 2:11 — "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
  - b. This he achieved through the power of God's Holy Spirit.
  - c. God's Spirit will help you also to be on guard, strong and ready to do battle with your foe.
6. It stimulates our memory and grants the power of instant recall.
  - a. John 14:26 — "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
  - b. As you yield to God, His Spirit will awaken your memory to the principles, truths, scriptures or lessons that you may have momentarily forgotten or fallen into disuse.
7. It convicts our conscience when we stray or backslide into sin.
  - a. Heb. 9:14 — "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
  - b. If you know God's will, listen to the wee voice of your conscience — it could be God speaking to you or bringing you back into a right standing with Him. I Kings 19:12 — "...a still small voice."
  - c. David said in Psalms 119:60 — "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."
  - d. That should be our constant attitude of life.

8. It imparts the power of instant self-control or instant self-command.
    - a. Eph 3:20 — *"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."* (See also Eph. 1:19)
    - b. If you really want God's help, it's instantly and readily available to assist you in surmounting any obstacle or overcoming any sin.
  9. It infuses God's very own love not only for the brethren but also for our enemies.
    - a. Rom. 5:5 — *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us."*
    - b. Act on the impulse of love whether or not you emotionally feel it.
    - c. The emotions or feelings of love will always follow.
    - d. True agape love is an act of the will inspired by God.
  10. It imparts the dynamic faith and courage of Christ.
    - a. The track record should have proved by now that God will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5).
    - b. And Jesus said, *"...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"* (Matt. 28:20).
    - c. God will give you the very faith and confidence to face any trial or crisis if you will sincerely ask Him for it.
    - d. But for it to be effective in your life, you must step out and actively use it.
  11. It causes the qualities, character and personality of God in us to flow out to others.
    - a. John 7:38-39 — *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive...)"*
    - b. The happiness, joy and the full abundant life of God in you should flow out to all of mankind within your reach and be a shining witness to them.
    - c. You must never forget that you are an ambassador for Christ and stand as one of His representatives on earth.
  12. It comforts and reassures us continually that we are God's children and destined for His Kingdom.
    - a. 1 John 3:1 — *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..."*
    - b. The Holy Spirit is called a Comforter (John 14:26)
    - c. One of its main functions as Comforter is to remind us of what we are, God's begotten sons, and were created to become members of His divine family.
    - d. It strengthens and comforts us in our trials to be strong and endure to the end.
- X. As we continue to grow there will be deeper manifestations and advanced stages signifying that we're receiving more of God's Spirit.
- A. Examples.
1. As we surrender, yield and obey, it will reveal greater depths of spiritual knowledge, understanding and wisdom.
    - a. Eph. 1:17-19 — *"... the Father ... may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened..."*
  2. It will guide us into deeper truths and enable us to see with increasing clarity God's will and ultimate purpose.
    - a. John 16:13 — *"... he [it — the Spirit] will guide you into all truth ..."*
  3. It will proceed with our growth and development by writing God's laws in our hearts and minds with each passing day.
    - a. Jer. 31:33 *"... I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ..."*
  4. We will come to have a greater and deeper knowledge of God day by day.
  5. We will come to have a more intense desire to please God and live for His glory. (This should become our supreme desire.)
  6. Our relationship to God will heighten so that eventually our contact will be steady and increasing.
  7. Our love for others will noticeably increase and we'll discover hundreds of heretofore unrecognized ways to serve.

8. We'll always be concerned about our lack of love for God and Jesus Christ.
9. We will have an increasing awareness of sin within and discover hidden idols we never knew existed.
10. This will lead to an increasing mourning because of sin within us.
11. We will become increasingly sensitive to every approach of sin, evil and temptation.
12. We will become aware in ourselves of breathings, hungerings and thirstings after purity, righteousness and holiness.
13. We will translate such feelings into action.
14. We will grow more and more to be like God by taking on His similarities and likenesses in every aspect of life.
  - a. We will start resembling Jesus Christ in particular.
  - b. II Cor. 3:18 — *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

NOTE: A few of the above 14 points are taken from studies of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones — Bible scholar and writer.

XI. Finally, would you like to know what it would take for God's Church to experience another outpouring of God's Spirit as on the day of Pentecost?

- A. To have greater favor with God and more power to do His Work?
- B. The answer can be found in Acts 1 and 2.
  1. Acts 1:4-8, 12-14 — *"...These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication..."*
  2. Acts 2:1-4 — *"...they were all with one accord in one place..."*
- C. The secret, then, is united prayer and supplication by the Church.
- D. We all must ask God as a body — as a team — in mutual love and harmony to send forth His Spirit in power and might.
- E. This united effort, however, presupposes wholehearted prayer and unreserved surrender to God.

XII. Conclusion.

"This then, is what it means to be led by God's Spirit."

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