

I. Introduction: What does it mean to be led by the Holy Spirit?

II. Don't be misled about spiritual guidance.

A. Almost everyone wants supernatural direction.

1. Even non-Christians seek supernatural guidance. Is. 47:33 8:19 19:3 II Ki. 17:16 Eze. 21:21 Deut. 18:10-12 Lev. 19:26,31
2. How do Christians seek supernatural guidance?

B. The Bible never teaches you to seek or expect mystical spiritual guidance.

1. God tells you to mistrust your feelings and impressions. Pr. 3:5-6 14:12 Jer. 17:9
2. How do you know the source or nature of your feelings? II Co. 11:14
3. A wicked generation seeks a sign. Mt. 12:39
4. The Bible is God's complete and sufficient revelation to guide you. II Ti. 3:16-17
5. We are meant to focus upon what God has revealed (in Scripture).
God's plan for the future is not for us to know. Deut. 29:29

C. What about cases in the Bible in which God provides supernatural guidance?

1. The Scriptural examples are clearly and unmistakably supernatural and verifiable, not vague impressions.
2. The Scriptural examples of supernatural guidance are rare and extraordinary, occurring at crucial points in the History of Redemption.
3. The New Testament never instructs you to seek or expect such guidance.
4. The standard for those who claim to have revelation from God is exceptionally high (perfection) and the consequences for failure are severe (death). Dt. 18:18f
5. Now that God's redemptive work in Christ is complete and the New Testament is finalized, there is not need for further revelation. Heb. 1:1-2 Eph. 2:20

III. How then does the Spirit lead you? v. 14a Ga. 5:18 Ps. 143:10

A. The Holy Spirit leads you to truth. 8:5-6

1. The Spirit points people to the truth in Christ. Jo. 14:26 16:13-15 17:17
2. The Spirit regenerates our hearts (the new birth) resulting in our faith in the gospel. Jo. 1:13 Acts 16:14
3. The Spirit renews us in connection with the Word. I Pet. 1:23 James 1:18
4. It is only by the work of the Spirit that anyone come to a true understanding of the Scriptures. I Co. 2:12-14 Lu. 24:44-45
5. In this age we receive illumination, not revelation.

B. The Holy Spirit leads you to obedience (holiness). 8:4,13 Eze. 36:27 Js. 4:5 Ga. 5:16f

1. The leading of the Spirit in this context is clearly moral. v. 13
2. The Spirit leads you to mortify the sinful deeds of the body. v. 13 Gal. 5:18-21 John 16:8 II Co. 7:10-11 II Tim. 2:25
3. The Spirit leads you to bear holy fruit. 8:4 12:6-8 Gal. 5:22-24 I Co. 12:7
4. The Spirit leads in connection with God's Word. Eze. 36:27
5. The work of the Spirit in you is ongoing.
6. What is the relationship between the Spirit's work and yours in sanctification? Phil. 2:12-13
7. The leading of the Spirit is the privilege of every child of God.

- C. How can you know you are being led by the Spirit?
1. Don't *rely* upon your feelings!
 2. Do you see evidences of His work in your life? John 3:8 Phil. 4:13
 3. If you are being controlled by the flesh, you are not being led by the Spirit. v. 13a
- D. Is there any subjective element (feeling) to being led by the Spirit? v. 16
1. Because of the Spirit's work you are convinced of the truth and love God.
 2. The Spirit changes your desires.
 3. The Spirit testifies that you are a child of God. v. 16
- E. How does the Spirit lead you in making crucial decisions?
1. Prayerfully search the Scriptures for God's moral will. 12:2 II Ti. 3:16-17
II Pe. 1:3 I Th. 4:3 5:16-18 Eph. 5:15-18 6:6 I Pe. 2:13-15 He. 13:20-21 I Jo. 2:17
 2. Seek godly counsel. Pr. 15:22 12:15 19:20
 3. Consider the interests of others. Phil. 2:3-4
 4. In non-moral matters exercise your freedom according to wisdom.
 5. Submit the results of your plans and decisions to God. Pr. 16:9 21:5 Js. 4:13-17
 6. A specific application: How can you know to what ministry God is calling you?
 - a. Timothy and Titus were told to choose leaders based upon objective criteria, not mystical guidance. I Ti. 3:1f Ti. 1:5f II Tim. 2:2
 - b. What are your desires? I Ti. 3:1
 - c. What are your qualifications? I Ti. 3:2f
 - d. What are your gifts (especially as seen by others)? Titus 1:9 I Pe. 4:10-11
 - e. What opportunities do you have (and what needs do you recognize)?

IV. Those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. v. 14b

- A. Paul introduces a rich new theme which describes our spiritual privileges. v. 15-17
9:26 I Jo. 3:1-2 II Co. 6:18 Jo. 1:12 Adoption, Access, An Inheritance.
- B. Only those who are led by the Holy Spirit are God's sons in this special sense. 8:5-8
Acts 17:28 Jo. 1:12-13 17:9 8:5-8 John 8:42-44

V. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions for Family Worship

1. How do non-Christians seek supernatural leading?
What does the Bible teach about such methods?
2. How do some Christians seek supernatural leading?
Why are these dangerous, or at best unreliable?
3. What is the difference between revelation and illumination?
Which should you expect today?
4. Of what kind of Spiritual leading is Paul speaking in Romans 8:14?
5. How can you know if you are being led by the Holy Spirit?
6. What should you do if you want to know God's will?
How can you know if God is calling you to full time ministry?
7. True or false (If false, tell why).
 - a. You can know the Spirit is leading you by how you feel.
 - b. The Bible never teaches that the leading of the Spirit is a feeling.
 - c. Feeling has nothing to do with the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. The experiences of supernatural guidance in the Bible are examples of how we should expect God to work in our lives today.
 - e. Those who enter full time ministry should be able to tell of a supernatural experience of being called.
 - f. Every person is equally a son of God.