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Bezalel Enlite

# GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

*How to know the will of God  
and be led by His Spirit.*



**Pastor Bankie**

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**Bankole Olusina**

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## **GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT**

*How to know the will of God and be led by His Spirit*

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# Introduction



One of the most common questions that trouble Christians from time to time is that of knowing what the Lord wants them to do in a situation. There are many practises in the body of Christ concerning how to determine the will of God each time we are at crossroads. About the commonest amongst Pentecostal Christians is that of 'hearing God.' It is very common to ask someone why he or she is doing something and be told they heard God. The problem is that the question of hearing God is so subjective that virtually anybody can justify anything with the phrase 'I heard God' or 'The Holy Spirit said to me.' This makes it difficult to give sound counsel to people. Many have used these phrases to justify doing what is clearly against sound reasoning and even the written word of God. A pastor would divorce his wife and marry a member of his congregation because, according to him, God told him to do so. Some have even been bold enough to carry on with affairs while being married, and when



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the man I have in mind was asked why, he said that was what the Lord told him to do. There have been instances of brethren getting married to unbelievers, and when they were asked why, the answer was that they prayed and in their spirits they heard that they should go ahead.

After all these years of being a believer, now I am so sceptical when someone tells me God told him to do something. The thought in my mind a lot of times is, 'you want to do it, period; let's not make it look like it is God who instructed you.'

Now, that does not mean I don't realize that God does speak supernaturally. The Scriptures are clear that He does, and there are numerous credible accounts to demonstrate it. I have personally had such experiences. The matter we need to address however is whether this is how He leads regularly. Many people will say yes to that, believing that the problem is that many do not know the method of hearing Him clearly. But I don't think so, neither does examining the Bible, especially the New Testament, indicate it. I believe that God speaks in such manners far less often than it is often made to seem.

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Actually, the plan of the Father is to make us into His walking and breathing will. He is turning us in reality to people who know Him so well and who have experienced His working enough to intuitively know what is right and pleasing to God. Sometimes we speak of the 'inner witness' as if it is a spectacular supernatural manifestation we are to learn to recognize, but it is nothing of such. An inner witness is the personal conviction that we all may have about different things. It is derived from learning and experience. When a cook says to you, 'that quantity of salt is enough,' he is speaking from his inner witness. Experience has produced conviction for him in that situation. That is the inner witness. He doesn't pray until he gets it; it is just a part of him. That is what the Father desires that His will becomes to us, and that is what this book is about. I want Christians to understand that knowing the will of God is not as hard as we have sometimes made it. It is not something that should create confusion among the brethren or in our private lives. We should not have people hiding behind hearing God so as to be left to do what is against good sense and the written Word.

What exactly is the will of God? There are many aspects to that expression as we will see from the

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scriptures. What is most important to note in all is that it does not describe what our personal preferences as believers are, or what *feels* good to us. It describes only that which is in accordance with the plan and purpose of God. It describes what is pleasing in His sight. When trying to determine the will of God, it is wrong to ask, 'will this husband be good or bad for me?' 'Will this job give me the desired promotion and advancement in career?' That is only seeking to know the future, and it is a form of divination (we shall see more on it later). The heart seeking the will of God asks a different set of questions. The woman asks, 'Is this the husband the Lord wants me to have?' 'Is this the man that I should be working with?' 'Is this the person whose life the Lord created me to make better?' The job seeker asks, 'Where am I supposed to bless people and manifest godliness?' It is not about what I will personally benefit but what I was created to be and to do.

Asking the right questions is often 90% of the path to knowing the will of God when we are at crossroads.

# Chapter 1



## **The Purpose of God**

*Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God — what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.*

*Rom 12:2 GNT*

The number one way by which God leads His children is by giving them the understanding of what is right and what is wrong. He desires to form in them a heart that understands what He likes and does not like; what He would want and wouldn't want. Basically they are to *understand* what is right from God's perspective, and what is wrong from the same angle. What the Lord is really doing is to make them like Himself so that even if He doesn't say anything specific about a matter, because they have His spirit inside them, they would know what is pleasing to the Lord in such a situation. This transformation is essentially what we mean when we say there is to be a

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renewal of the mind (We shall examine the *mind* more later).

We see this exemplified by Paul when He wrote in reply to a letter from the Corinthians. There were issues concerning what was right to do in marriage matters in the church, and the brethren had written to Paul to get the mind of God. Here are two verses from his reply:

*Now regarding your question about the young women who are not yet married. I do not have a command from the Lord for them. But the Lord in his mercy has given me **wisdom that can be trusted**, and I will share it with you.*

1 Cor 7:25 NLT

*But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think **that I also have the Spirit of God**. 1 Cor 7:40*

Now, that is what I am talking about. Paul had the boldness to offer a word as the will of God even when the Lord did not *speak* to Him on the matter at hand. Notice in this chapter (1 Cor 7) that he twice told them that the Lord did not give him a specific word concerning what he was writing to them, but despite that he went ahead to give a word as if from the Lord.

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Like he said in verse 40, he was sharing his opinion and that could be trusted to be as close to what God would want under those circumstances as was possible. He spoke his mind, like we often say, and that mind was the mind of Christ. Now, that is the ultimate goal of the Father.

Please note that Paul also used to hear God when the Lord would indeed speak; for example in verse 10 of that chapter, he got an express word from the Lord about divorce among Christian couples.\* But, as we will later see, Paul knew that such a clear word from God would not be offered if the Lord had already

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\*The way Christians carry on these days, it is as if the Lord said nothing about this matter of divorce among them. Even though this book is not on that subject but let me use this opportunity to point out the word of the Lord. The Lord states clearly that Christian couples *must* not divorce. If they have to separate for certain reasons, they may do so but are to maintain chastity and not marry someone else. If they are desirous of re-marriage, then they should go for reconciliation to their life partners. The Lord does not recognize our so-called irreconcilable differences. These days, even pastors divorce their wives for reasons not acceptable to the Lord and then go ahead and remarry, and the church pretends like the Lord said nothing about it. But He has given clear words. Please I am not saying remaining in a difficult marriage is easy, but what is easy is different from what is commanded expressly by our Lord. Leaving a difficult marriage to marry someone else is disobeying the word of God. The only exceptions I find in the Scriptures to this rule for believers are when one of the partners decides to live in adultery or abandons the faith totally.

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granted the wisdom necessary to know what to do or say.

In our everyday life, the plan of God is that we will be able to understand what is good and what is wrong from His perspective, and based on this knowledge we will make up our minds in *most* matters. The Lord's main aim is not to get us to learn how to hear utterances from the Holy Spirit, even though He will make every obedient child of His hear them when necessary; He is rather putting that spirit into us so that we will be able to make godly decisions which are not based on natural or common human wisdom. This spirit will make us like what He likes, love what He loves, want what He wants and make us passionate about what He is passionate about. That is what it means to have somebody's spirit.

To illustrate this matter of having someone's spirit, let me tell a story.

### **The Man With My Spirit**

I was invited many years ago to speak on a university campus by the coalition of Christian fellowships in the school, and they were using a very large hall to host the event. Now, a man who had been a keen

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disciple of my ministry saw the adverts and so came to attend the programme. As at this time he had never met me nor had he ever seen me in the flesh. On that day of the programme he came early and when he entered the hall, he saw the pulpit I would be speaking from. He noticed where it was kept, on a high place, and said to himself, 'Pastor Bankie will not like to stand there to preach.' He called the attention of the leaders of the event to that fact. 'Who are you?' They needed to know. 'Are you a member of Pastor Bankie's team?' 'No,' was his answer, and so they paid him no further attention.

The programme got on with the usual Christian preliminaries and I arrived sometime during the preliminaries. Then the time came for me to speak, I was introduced and I mounted the platform. The first thing I said was something like, 'why is this thing raised so high here. Why can't it be down where I will be close to the congregation?' I requested that the pulpit be moved down. I felt too high and lifted up where it was. You can imagine why the brother I am speaking of would have been laughing in his mind. He had warned them, but they did not listen to him. Please follow my point here. This man knew what my feeling would be about an issue he didn't discuss



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with me ahead; in fact, he had never heard me speak about such a thing.

So how did he know? That is what is called having someone's spirit.

After the meeting that day, he came to speak with me, and that was when he told me of his earlier encounter with the organizers. He also told me he had listened to all my messages he could lay his hands on and had read all my books. He has been an ardent listener to my radio programme 'The Way of Success.' The word of God which I was preaching had *had* a deep effect on his life. He was pursuing his career and making marriage plans in a radically different way from other people around him because he had been transformed by my teaching of the word of God. He knew how I thought and how I felt about things, so much so that when he saw a trivial thing like a pulpit kept on a high platform, he knew I wouldn't like it, and he was right. He had drunk of my spirit. There had been a transference of a nature inside me to him. Without my saying anything to him, and without us having ever physically met, he could discern my will. Let me say it again: that is what is called having a spirit.

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I am sure you understand that now. That is what the Lord is doing in the lives of Christians—He is making them imbibe His spirit. Many times when people say 'God spoke to me,' we see it as a sign of spirituality when indeed it is nothing of such. The more mature a believer becomes, the less the Lord needs to 'speak' before he or she will discern His will, except we are dealing with a prophetic office in which such a person often has the duty to transmit the specific word of the Lord to people.\* As we mature as believers we are able more and more to know the will and mind of God without special communications. That is the desire and the plan of the Lord.

*For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Heb 5:13-14*

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\*The ministry of a prophet is a different matter and we will see an aspect of it later in this book.

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# Chapter 2



## **The Mind-System of the Will of God**

In learning to discern the will of God, it does not mean we are being trained to hear voices or pick up spiritual signals, it is that our spiritual senses are being trained to *know* and have God's attitude. The training is by the word of God.

Let me explain something about the *will of God*.

The will of God is not just a specific decision we make at a particular point in time. The will of God is actually a system of reasoning; it is a value system we live by. It is the way of reasoning which is opposite to the system of the world. We are all brought up as natural persons to reason according to the order of a society. We operate by the value systems and decision making processes of our homes and environment. That is being part of a worldly system. The will of God is a different and superior system, just like God said through Isaiah.

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*Let the wicked leave their way of life, and change their **way of thinking**... "My thoughts," says the Lord, "are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. Isa 55:7-8  
GNT*

When we give our lives to Christ and begin to live as believers, it is demanded that we shave off the system of the world from our minds and take up the mind-system, the reasoning pattern, or the value system, of God. This new system is what is called the will of God. That was what Paul called transformation when he wrote to the church in Rome.

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Rom 12:2*

In this context, and as generally used in the New Testament, the mind does not actually speak of what one is thinking about, rather it speaks of *how* we reason about things. The mind is the processing platform for information we receive. It is how we interpret things. The world has its way of interpreting things, while the Lord has a different way He says that His children should interpret and relate with

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things. That operating system of the mind prescribed by the Lord is what is called the will of God. It is something we are supposed to learn. It is something we get accustomed to by training.

So we see that it is not the person who knows how to 'hear God' that knows the will of God but the person who understands His way of reasoning. Such a person is therefore said to have the mind of God. That was why Paul could dare to tell the Corinthians what to do even when he did not have a prophetic word for them. A prophetic word is a direct instruction from God which is not much processed in the mind of the vessel being used; it is just delivered unaltered. Sometimes the prophet doesn't even know what he or she is talking about. When the Lord did not give such a word, the man Paul tapped into the mind of God and was able to give the people a word that was in line with the will of God.

Please, what I am endeavouring to emphasize here is that we are supposed to learn and be accustomed to the will of God; it is a way by which we are to walk all the time. It is not an instruction we get from heaven only when we are at crossroads and need to make crucial decisions. We are to accumulate the words

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God has given in ages past into our hearts and by this know His pattern. We use also the experiences of those who have walked with Him to understand the way He thinks, and the result is that we *understand* the will of God.

**It is a Result of Training**

Walking in the will of God is therefore a result of learning. It is as you are trained with the word of God and through experiences that you become able to understand the will of God. If the will of God was something that is to be communicated to us each time we have to make a decision, then the word of God would have been more emphatic on our hearing or receiving the will of God. Instead what we find is that the word of God emphasizes more on understanding the will of God.

*So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Eph 5:17*

*...let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you... Rom 12:2 NLT*

*...the mature, who because of practice have their senses*

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*trained to discern good and evil. Heb 5:14*

From Ephesians 5:17 quoted above, we can see that the mind-set of the world is foolishness, whereas the renewed mind walks in wisdom, and that is the will of God. Walking in divine wisdom is therefore walking in the will of God.

To know and walk in the will of God therefore comes from learning the word of God. That is the discipline. It is not the discipline to pray until the Lord talks to you; it is to take that which He has spoken in the scriptures and pray for understanding. It is to employ the diverse ministries (preachers and teachers) that He has placed in the body of Christ, especially the ministry of teachers, and use these to build yourself up in the knowledge of His word. Walking in God's will is a consequence of renewing our minds with heavenly wisdom and understanding. Paul made this very clear as he prayed for the Colossians.

*...(we) ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects. Col 1:9-10*



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It is as we are filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding that His will becomes a part of us. The consequence is that we walk in a manner pleasing to Him all the time.

# Chapter 3



## **The World's Wisdom vs. the Wisdom of God**

So far I have tried to show that the will of God is not just something we *hear* from the Spirit when we want to make a decision. We have seen it to be the system of values and the thinking processes which we live by everyday. We have seen that it can also be called walking in the wisdom of God. Wisdom is the application of knowledge to get desired results, and the wisdom of God is to use the knowledge of the word of God to make decisions. That is the number one way by which the Lord leads His children.

For example, the world teaches us that having money is crucial and so we must pursue it. Many books have been written on how to be rich, and people give these things primary attention. But the wisdom of God tells us that *'a man's life does not consist in the abundance of money he has.'* The first will of God about money therefore is not about how to get it or if to be rich, but to know that one's value in life is not determined by

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money at all. Without the knowledge of this, every other thing someone is supposedly hearing is *not* the will of God, even if an angel were to appear and speak.

The system of the world tells us that the more the number of 'powerful' people a person knows, the better for him. But the word of God tells us that anyone trusting in human connections is walking under a curse. David said if we have God in heaven, on the earth we must desire no human connections.\*

These are a few examples of the-way-of-the-world *versus* the-word-of-God. *The person who makes decisions based on the word of God is said to be walking in the will of God.*

Let us take the life of Lot as an example in comparing worldly wisdom with the will of God.

There was a time that Abraham and Lot had to separate from one another; this was because of frictions beginning to arise between their workers. Lot was Abraham's nephew. Abram (later becoming Abraham) said to Lot that so that the conflict would

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\*Jer 17:5; Ps 73:25

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not ruin their relationship as close relatives, since the whole countryside was open to them, Lot should choose any side he wanted while he, Abraham, would take the opposite. If Lot wanted the left, he would go to the right and *vice versa*.

Now, every decision we make in our lives has underlying reasons, and it is those reasons that determine whether we are deciding according to the will of God or not. Remember that what we call *mind* is the reasoning process as we interpret things. Those things inside our heart which control our actions are the things the Lord wants to change in drawing us into His will. Many people are concerned about whether they heard God or not, whereas God is actually more concerned as to whether the things inside them which are against a true walk with Him have been removed. It is not whether I heard God correctly, but that I have a heart that is able to walk trusting Him. David said, *'Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me, and guide me in the everlasting way'* (Ps 139:23-24 GNT). That is what walking in the will of God is all about. It is not about the ability to discern spiritual voices and 'leadings' but about a life controlled by divine attitudes,

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motivations, and standards.

So, let us see how Lot made up his mind when he had to decide which direction to choose.

**Lot's Mind vs. Abram's Mind**

*Lot looked around and saw that the whole Jordan Valley, all the way to Zoar, had plenty of water, like the Garden of the Lord or like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord had destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose the whole Jordan Valley for himself and moved away toward the east. That is how the two men parted. Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, and Lot settled among the cities in the valley and camped near Sodom, whose people were wicked and sinned against the Lord. Gen 13:10-13 GNT*

Lot operated simply by the sight of his eyes. He looked only at external things. He looked at where the land was greener and the flow of water was abundant. He disregarded the fact that he was going to move and fellowship with wicked sinners. It didn't matter to him as long as the land around them was good. That is what is called worldliness, or carnality. Carnality, or worldliness, is judging things according to what the eyes see and according to personal pleasure. It is when we do not use the word of God as

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the standard for measuring things.

Abram, on the other hand, what was his way of making choices?

We see that Abram was not concerned *first* about external things. The man was operating many good spiritual principles in his *mind*—the thinking process in decision making. I assume the Lord taught him these things over time. These principles can be seen scattered all over the Bible but written especially clearly in the New Testament books. He was operating the wisdom of God, which *is* the will of God.

First, we can see that *peace* mattered to Abram. Paul wrote later to tell us to do everything within our powers to be at peace with everyone (Rom 12:18; Heb 12:14). So we can say appropriately that Abram was operating the wisdom of God in choosing peace over conflict; he was by that walking in the will of God.

Next, notice that Abram allowed Lot to choose first. Again this is in line with the will of God, as it is written,

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*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor. Rom 12:10*

There is something we can easily notice about the life of this man Abram. He was relaxed about the matter of prosperity, and so was not a grabber. Why was he relaxed? It was because of the trust he had in God's promise, the same promise that brought him that far from a place where he was initially settled. He rested on that promise and so was not an eager grabber. His conviction about the promise is clear from his later conversation with the king of Sodom, this was when they were discussing the matter of the goods and men that were taken captive in war.

*And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the Lord God Most High... that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' Gen 14:21-24*

So sure was he of the promise of God that he refused the goods that were rightfully his own by reason of conquest in battle. This attitude was why it was not difficult for him to let Lot choose before him. He knew

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God was working in his life and would make him rich. Again, this is walking in the wisdom of God.

Being in the centre of the will of God for Abram at this point was not about 'did God speak to you where to choose in this conflict or about what to do in this matter?' No. As long as he guided himself by certain sound spiritual principles, he was walking *automatically* in the will of God. It is walking by those spiritual principles that is the will of God; it is not about any special communication from heaven.

Like I explained at the beginning, it is this operating system that God is working into our lives, so that we will operate by the wisdom of God and the right spirit, rather than by the wisdom of the world and the control of the flesh.



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# Chapter 4



## **The Right Spirit**

There is this belief with us that once God communicates His will clearly to us we will do it, whatever the will might be. This is the reason we are often so intent on hearing God's will from the Spirit. Unfortunately, life is not like that. The knowledge of the will of God does not automatically translate to obeying it. There are many more things that control our actions beyond just knowing what we are required to do. The commandments of God were clear to Israel and yet they broke almost every single one of them. Most of us know the beatitudes and other instructions of the Lord, but how many of us keep those things. Even Paul lamented at a time that even though he knew the law and wanted to keep it, doing so was another matter and he didn't succeed in it. He failed because the law of disobedience was at work in his flesh (Rom 7:21-23). In summary, it is possible to be clear as to what God wants us to do and still not do it.

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So, doing the will of God entails much more than 'has He spoken?' We are often so taken by this 'heard God,' 'God spoke to me' thing that we miss the real problems. We have seen that the will of God, rather than being just an instruction at a point, is actually a way of life derived from understanding the word of God, but what I want to point out at this time is that no matter how clear the instruction of God is for our lives, if we do not have the right spirit, we will not obey it. This is the reason why Israel continued to break the clear commandments of God in the wilderness. It is the reason why they were not able to go into the Promised Land. They had an Egypt-fixation. Where you are fixed on is what determines the kinds of doors that open to you and the ability you will have for action.

*And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. Heb 11:15*

Their hearts had not fully left Egypt. For this reason, their first reaction to solving every problem was to appoint someone to lead them *back* to Egypt. Truly they loved Egypt more than they loved the Promised Land. In summary, they had a *spirit* that led to Egypt.

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Or, we can say it this way: they had the spirit of Egypt.

The spirit someone has is that propelling force within him. What does he want out of life? Many people who claim to be seeking the will of God actually have the spirit of covetousness, so they always 'hear' God telling them to go to where the grass is green. No matter the manifestation they have to describe how they made their decision, the fact is that once the spirit is wrong, the conclusion cannot be right, even if it appears like the Lord showed up to help them decide.

We know that God told Israel clearly through Samuel that He did not want them to have a king, that they were by their request for one rejecting His rulership over them, but they were bent on having their own way. Even though they later heard God clearly concerning the choice of Saul as the king, yet Saul was never the will of God. Saul was a compromise from the Lord to a stubborn and obstinate people. That is why it is hard for me to believe people who tell me it was God who told them to relocate to a more prosperous environment. See, you can go anywhere you want, but please hold your own spirit responsible *first* before you hold the Lord responsible

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for your decision. Who knows the harassment the Lord had to endure from you before revealing to you that you should go. The Lord will eventually choose a Saul for whoever will not accept the divine counsel of Samuel.\*

No matter how much the Lord wants to reveal His will to someone, obedience will be impossible if the spirit is wrong. We cannot know what the Lord wants us to do and successfully do it if the spirit is wrong. For that reason, the primary duty of the believer is to ensure he has the right spirit, not to know how to hear God.

Let us look at Balaam as an example.

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\*I have heard it said by people quite a number of times over the last many years, that God told them to leave the country and move to another. Among all these, not one person has been told by God to relocate to another African country or any country at all that is less developed and physically less prosperous than Nigeria. See, God led Abram out of a city that had brick buildings and piped water to start a nomadic life. He forbade Isaac from going to Egypt even in the time of famine, demanding that he prospered by faith in the land of trouble. Later, He led Jacob and his household to Egypt for a season. God also led Moses out of Egypt into the wilderness (Heb 11:27). I could go on and on, and you will see that it was less common for God to lead people to more comfortable lives. He always led people in search of purpose, sometimes to more comfortable places but most times the other way. So you understand my concern when all the *God-told-me's* I have been hearing have been only towards greener pastures. I have serious

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## **The Error of Balaam**

Balaam is an interesting story and he illustrates well why hearing the voice or the spirit of God is not as important as having the wisdom of God and the right spirit.

Balaam's story was confusing to me for a long time. One, Balak's people came with their proposal for him to come curse the people of God for a good fee. Balaam reacted in what I considered a perfect way—he insisted on asking the Lord whether He would approve or not. And the Lord answered him promptly in the negative. Furthermore, Balaam was dutiful in reporting the decision of the Lord to the visitors. These all seemed good to me, and it should to any Christian.

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doubt most of these have been God. If people have really been hearing God, we would have heard leadings in both directions. It is also interesting to note that I rarely hear 'God told me to go' from those who I have encountered who have gone to poorer environments. It has almost always been either a matter of posting by superiors, or a passion in their hearts, the latter being more often. I have heard statements like, 'there is a great need in East Africa, francophone West Africa, etc.' I have heard statements like, 'we need to take this gospel to all these places; there is a lot of darkness and we are here enjoying the light alone.' It is rare for them to say, 'God told me to go.' Is it that they are less spiritual or they are more real and so do not need to hide behind God-told-me? I go with the latter option. They are focused on life as an assignment they must fulfil. They are people on a mission to serve God.

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Next, Balak's emissaries came back, and this time they promised Balaam more money than before. Again he did what I used to think was good—he went to inquire of the Lord whether he should go or not. This time the Lord told him to go. In fact, the Lord even told him how to behave when he would have reached the place. I would think the 'prophet' heard God clearly and so had discovered the will of God. But now the story gets really crazy. The man set on his way according to the word of God and yet trouble met him on the way. A modern Christian would have said it was the devil blocking his way. But it wasn't.

*But **God** was angry that Balaam was going, so he sent the **angel of the Lord** to stand in the road to block his way... Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand. Num 22:22-23 NLT*

Lord please wait, please wait! What is going on here? First, You tell him to go, then You are angry he is going. Am I missing something? Was someone impersonating You? Some Christians would say it was the devil pretending to be You. Or, is it a bad translation of the Holy Bible?

If this doesn't confuse someone, I wonder what else

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would. But I thank God because we know that He always does what is right and there is no wickedness or confusion in Him. We just need to learn His ways.

Before I go on to explain, let me summarize what we can learn from this encounter here: *The fact that you heard the voice of God clearly does not mean you have discovered the will of God.* It is obvious here that Balaam heard His voice but missed His will. Many Christians have 'heard' God and yet they missed His will. Anytime you hear the voice of God, if indeed you are sure you did, what you thus discover is the judgement of God, not necessarily His will.

### **The Will vs. the Judgement**

The judgment of God can also be expressed as His decision or decree. It is what He expresses when all things have been put together. As an example, He decreed that a lying spirit should go and provoke lies in the mouths of Ahab's prophets so that Ahab might go to Ramoth-gilead and perish there; He did this when in actual fact His will has always been that no one should perish but that all should come to repentance.\* God's *will* is the thing He actually desires, but this can only happen when all things are

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\*1 Kg 22:22; 2 Pet 3:9



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conformed to Him. The will of God happens when men walking with Him are acceptable to Him in their thoughts and actions. His judgement, or decree, however is affected by many things, His will being only *one* of the things.

Apart from God's will, other things that affect His judgment include the character of the person praying, what the person is actually seeking, what time or season it is, etc. These things affect the decree of God. The fact that God told Balaam to do something does not mean that was what He actually wanted. The *will* of God was that Balaam would not go, but the judgment of God was that He should go.

Why did God decree that Balaam should go?

Remember that I mentioned that God's will is only done when those relating with Him are perfectly aligned in their hearts to it, and when they pray correctly. Balaam's will was not subject to the will of God. It might appear so because he said he could only go where God said to go, but he only said that because he understood there was no other way to succeed in this business. He was a diviner who understood how spiritual things worked, and that

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was how he got his reputation. But when it came to his spirit, Balaam had a covetous spirit and was not subject to God in his heart; he loved the money that was being offered.

*...forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. 2 Pet 2:15*

The thing the man loved coloured his prayers before God and that was why God judged and decreed that he should go. The truth is that the man wanted to go and God was only a stumbling block to what he actually wanted to do. See, when we are stubborn, God will sometimes give a decree that is not in accordance with His true will. Balaam may have known how to hear God's voice, but he was not subject to the will of God. This Balaam, despite knowing expressly the will of God concerning Israel, went ahead to teach Balak how to subvert God's desire for the nation (Rev 2:14). The man's heart was not subject to the will of God.

Child of God, knowing how to hear the voice of God is not at all half as important as being subject to His will, laying down your life and saying 'I will only

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want what He wants.' You must be careful that you are not using Him to get what you want. Until you get to that point, hearing God is nothing. Balaam heard God but missed God's will. He took action based upon what he heard but he almost died for it. 'God spoke to me to do it' does not mean you will prosper in doing it. God was not pleased with him. He had a wrong spirit.

### **Israel and Divorce**

Let me use another illustration to help people know that they must be careful when they think the fact that they heard a voice means they have discovered the will of God.

There was a time that the Jews came to the Lord Jesus to test Him. They wanted to know if they could divorce their wives. Most of us know the story. We remember that the Lord told them it was not allowed in God's perfect will. He told them categorically what the will and original plan of God was.

*He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? Consequently they are no longer*

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*two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate. Matt 19:4-6*

What He told them here was the way God wanted it to be. But there was a problem: God had spoken to them through Moses that they could divorce their wives if necessary. It was one of the commandments God *dictated* to Moses for them. There was confusion. How would Jesus explain this? Was He by this contradicting God who He said was His Father?

The Lord's answer is the reason why I am using the story here. He told them in simple terms that what they heard from Moses was not the pure will of God; rather it was a decree released because of the type of people the Israelites were.

*Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. Matt 19:8-9*

Remember it was not actually Moses; he was only giving the decrees of God. It is clear that the Lord Jesus was explaining that the state of our hearts affect what we hear from God. We are not to confuse what we hear supernaturally with the will of God which is perfect.

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*Unless your spirit is right, you cannot discern the true will of God, and that is why the Lord is more concerned about giving us the right spirit than teaching us how to hear voices. Unfortunately we often think we are spiritual because we know how to hear the voice of the Spirit. Spirituality is not what you hear but what state your heart is in. What you hear is only as true as your heart is pure. It is the purity of heart and spirit that is the Lord's aim in our lives.*

So instead of practising how to hear the voice of God or have visions and interpret dreams, what we need to do is to purify our spirits. We need to remove every thought and every idea that is not perfectly aligned with the character of Christ we see in the scriptures. Even though knowing the written word of God is the way by which we discern the general will of God, that knowledge will not help us discover the pure will of God unless our spirits are pure. Like I mentioned earlier, that was the problem with Balaam. He knew the voice of God but it didn't matter much because his spirit was not pure.

# Chapter 5



## **Can a Christian's Spirit be Polluted?**

Sometimes we hear Christians say things like, 'my spirit said,' 'this is how I feel in my spirit,' and other such phrases. I remember a young woman who met me once after church; she requested to talk with me because, according to her, her spirit just then indicated she should. Let's make a long story short, she needed money and her spirit said she should ask me. Was it her spirit? If it was, was it speaking for God?

Also, I have been in church services in which the Pastor decides that he's about to do something off normal in the service because that is what his spirit says. Then he goes on to receive a special offering. Again, was it really his spirit? If so, was it telling us the mind of God?

Usually when we Christians say 'my spirit said,' we are generally expected to give it a prophetic

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reverence. It is as if we are saying, 'The Lord has communicated His will and this is it.' It is supposed to be the leading of the Holy Spirit. Part of the reason for this attitude is the theology that the spirit of the Christian is pure, and so releases only pure things, like in speaking for God, and that every other defilement is in the soul and the body. We also generally believe that the Holy Spirit speaks to us through our spirits, so when I tell someone a thing originates from my spirit, they should respect it as if it was the leading of the Holy Spirit Himself. But, is this true?

Unfortunately, it is not. The simple reason why it cannot be true is that the word of God teaches us that a Christian's spirit can be defiled. Yes it is true that we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, but that does not mean that our spirits cannot be defiled. A Christian can indeed have a polluted or defiled spirit. This is a fact clearly stated by Paul to the Corinthians.

*Therefore, since these [great] promises are ours, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that contaminates and defiles body and spirit, and bring [our] consecration to completeness in the [reverential] fear of God. 2 Cor 7:1 AMP*

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Until our consecration is complete, the defilement of the spirit is not totally gone. A contaminated spirit is when a Christian loves the world. It is when the child of God is concerned about making it in Egypt rather than discovering the plan of God for the Promised Land. The spirit of the Christian is contaminated by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. And if the spirit can be thus polluted, then what is coming out of it may be polluted too.

Many times when you ask Christians, 'why did you do this?' They say 'my spirit said to do so.' I am saying today that *that* does not mean it is God. You may have been tricked by a polluted spirit. Sometimes people hear the voice of an anxious spirit, some hear the voice of a proud spirit, some the voice of an angry or vengeful spirit, etc.; the spirit is defiled and the voice from it is not accurate according to the will of God.

One of the things I have seen in this Christian walk is that many times Christians are praying to hear the voice of God when their spirits are not right. What they hear is just a release of the composite of the will of God and the defilement of their spirits. When hard-hearted people come to hear God about divorce, their spirits will hear that it is okay, so says the Lord Jesus.



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Once we are determined to do something, except we come to God with a prayer of consecration, then whatever we hear is just our polluted spirits beclouding the true will of God.

Beyond just assuming that what their spirits say is the will of God, many people have even gone further to declare it as the voice of God. Unfortunately there are two problems merged into one in that. First, the voice of the human spirit, even if born again, is NOT the voice of the Holy Spirit; it is a human spirit and what is coming out of it is just as good as the whole of that spirit is pure. The degree of contamination of the spirit affects how accurate it's voice is. The second problem there is that even if it was the voice of the Holy Spirit they were hearing, it is not a guarantee that it is in line with the will of God, a fact that we have already seen. It may just be God choosing Saul for the person who has rejected Him as king.

### **Contaminants of the Spirit**

So we see that a Christian's spirit may be polluted. A major pollutant of the spirit of Christians is the fear of tomorrow, producing anxiety in the heart. David talked about these anxious thoughts, and the Lord Jesus warned about them too.

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*Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
And lead me in the everlasting way. Ps 139:23-24*

*Therefore do not worry and be anxious, saying,  
'What are we going to have to eat?' Matt 6:31 AMP*

When there are anxious thoughts in the heart, the spirit is polluted. A believer then operates with the spirit of fear or timidity. The result is that they hear things from their spirits but the things are not correct. A Christian who has the fear of tomorrow can pray about whether he should change his job and relocate to another place. No matter how hard he prays, whatever comes to him as a voice from his spirit cannot be trusted until he has removed that fear from his life with the word of God. He needs to first operate 'take no thought for tomorrow' before anything his spirit says to him can be trusted.

I have heard this my-spirit-said thing so much that it has almost lost meaning with me. Pastors will open church branches in rich areas because their spirits said to do so, and it is true that it was their spirits which spoke; but it was not the Spirit of Christ

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guiding them. It was the spirit of worldliness and incomplete trust in God. Their tainted spirits indicated that if they have branches in these places, they will have the money they need to move their ministries forward. Yes, it was their spirit, but it doesn't make it right.

Remember the young woman who asked to speak with me after a church service, who I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter? I don't believe she heard God; she needed money and I looked like I had enough to spare. Indeed she was right in that her spirit spoke to her, but it was only a spirit set on getting human help. I'm not saying it is wrong to ask for help, but it is wrong to make it sound like it was the Lord who asked you to do it.

Sometimes, like in the area of choice making in marriage, a man tells you that his spirit tells him that a lady is the choice of God for him. Did his spirit talk to him? Yes, certainly. But does it mean it is God? Not necessarily. It *may* just mean that he likes her and she fits something deep inside him that even he may be unaware is there. That deep thing inside him, which is actually part of what we generally call his spirit, is speaking to him. Unfortunately because he has been

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taught that as a Christian his spirit has been renewed, he thinks it is the Spirit of God.\*

See, it is important that we bear in mind that we can have things inside us that we do not even know are there but these are seeking to control our actions. They are part of what is called flesh. The flesh is not just the material body; it is rather anything produced in us by the influences of the world. For example, the eyes can cooperate with the old man and produce lust. This lust of the eyes can lie dormant in a person and the fellow doesn't know it is there. But it is working in there, and this is why David explained that it is only the Lord that can determine what is inside, and the Lord said through Jeremiah that He is the only one who tests the hearts of men.

*The human heart is the most deceitful of all things,  
and desperately wicked.*

*Who really knows how bad it is?*

*But I, the Lord, search all hearts*

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\*There is what psychologists call the *Oedipus complex*. A young man is attracted to a lady that reminds him of his mother. It is a result of excessive attachment to an exceedingly caring mother. A person with that kind of complex will be attracted to that kind of woman and will tell you it is his spirit. The name is derived from the Greek mythology about Oedipus who killed his father and without realizing it married his mother.

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*and examine secret motives. Jer 17:9-10*

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
And see if there be any hurtful way in me. Ps 139*

What the Christian needs to do is to pray about the purification of his heart with the Word; obeying the voice of his spirit should not be his priority. That young man's spirit may be talking to him about the young woman, but he must take his desire and make it a prayer matter. He must ask the Lord to check whether there is any 'hurtful' thing in him that is making him like the woman. It is possible that the news media and social media polluted his mind with the figures of models and showbiz stars. That would be a hurtful thing. The thing is inside and is pulling him to her, but it is her figure that is the attraction. He may have the Oedipus weakness. Or it may be that he is lazy and is looking for a woman who just wants to bear his name while she takes care of herself (Is 4:1), and this lady is a professional. That would be pollution of the spirit too. Many men are like that in their hearts and so they love materially successful women in a special but ungodly way.

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In this area of marriage, some men are fixed on certain criteria which do seem good but are actually not the will of God. For example a man called to the preaching ministry may think his wife must be a minister in songs or someone who can also preach. It may have been derived unconsciously from observing some 'successful' ministers. These are all pollutions of the spirit and they make the spirit of a man speak things that are not God's plan. There is no substitute for prayer and trusting the Lord to work out things in accordance with what pleases Him. A believer cannot just assume that because his spirit indicates something, it is God. It is only after he would have confessed away every secret fault in him that he can begin to act on the feeling or urge, and that is all it is actually — a feeling. We can call it perception but your spirit speaking to you is actually how you *feel* about a situation; it is not a feeling from the skin but one from deep inside.

I heard someone say that if we pray about those things from our spirits with patience, continuing a close walk with the Lord by His word, over time we will discover that the ones from God will get stronger, while the ones from our own 'pollutions' will gently wane. That seems very correct to me.

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## **Constant Cleansing**

What we need as believers is the constant purging of our spirits from contaminants, using the word of God and prayer. It is prayer and faith that are actually reliable, not the feeling of our spirits. Don't forget that a man like Paul, who testified that he was serving God with his spirit (Rom 1:9), had his spirit desirous of going into several cities to preach but the Holy Spirit refused him to go into certain places at certain times (Acts 16:8). Yes, the Holy Spirit may lead us by our spirits, but let us not just assume that because it is clearly from our spirits, it must be in line with the will of God at that time. God may have a different plan. Our duty is to pray constantly, lay everything before Him and trust that He is working in our lives.

Trust is what He seeks.

*When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? Luk 18:8*

# Chapter 6



## **The Newness of Spirit**

In the beginning of this book I pointed out that indeed the Lord wants to lead us by the inward witness and by our spirits, as it is written,

*The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord,  
Searching all the innermost parts of his being. Prov 20:27*

He is transforming us to become exactly like Him. His plan is that we will want what he wants, love what he loves and have the same precepts and laws He operates by. What He did was to put the Spirit of Christ into us at the new birth, so that the seed of God now dwells in us. That spirit is in the soul of every true believer, and the primary effect is that it draws the believer continually closer to the Lord. It is like the little baby that innately craves the presence of the mother, it seeks the breast by reflex and cries if not fed breast-milk. It desires the warmth of the body of the mother and bonds with her. That is what the new



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spirit from God in us does. We are now believers and so we want the Lord more than ever before.

This spirit is inside, it is like light that He has shone upon our hearts. If we allow it do its work, it will steadily grow until it takes everything over and the child of God reflects perfectly what the Father is. There is indeed a process and period of growth. It is not a one-day affair. No wonder Peter said it thus:

*Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. 1 Pet 2:1-4*

The milk is necessary. If the spirit is indeed alive and the milk of the Word is fed to the person, then he will grow. He will grow and become one who feels as God feels, sees as God sees and who constantly does what is pleasing to the Lord. He will become one whose spirit can be trusted every single time it leads. He would have become an exact representation of the Father.

But there is a problem. First, the presence of light does

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not imply an automatic disappearance of darkness. This may seem contrary to common thinking in which we think light and darkness are mutually exclusive, but the word of God expresses a different reality. Actually, when light comes, there must be a deliberate separation of light from darkness just as the Lord did at creation (Gen 1:4). Let's also remember that every time the Lord plants something, the enemy would come and try to plant something else.\*

So we see that it is paramount on the believer to separate darkness from the light which the Lord has shone in his or her heart. He must remove from himself every defilement of flesh and spirit (we saw in the last chapter the consequences of the presence of defilement). We must do this if the plan of God to lead us simply by our spirits will be effective. Our spirits then become the simple inward witness and inner voice. We need to purify our spirits.

### **Consecration; the Release of a Pure Spirit**

But how do we purify our spirits?

*Therefore, since these great promises are ours, beloved, let*

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\*Matt 13:27, 28

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*us cleanse ourselves from everything that contaminates and defiles body and spirit, and **bring our consecration** to completeness in the reverential fear of God. 2 Cor 7:1 AMP*

This rendering in the Amplified Bible brilliantly shows us what to do so as to have a pure spirit. It says it is a matter of full consecration to God. Until we are properly consecrated we cannot discern the will of God for our lives.

When we talk about consecration, it means to examine our lives and ensure that we are living solely for the purpose of pleasing the Lord. See, *it is what the heart is secretly set upon that the spirit leads to*. It is not the supernaturalness of the guidance that is important but what the heart is set upon. We are therefore to deliberately remove everything that is contrary to the word of God and His purpose in our lives. We do this in prayer.

Prayer is vital. But it is not possible to pray effectively unless the word of God is constantly being fed into us. It is that word that exposes the darkness in us, and then we can remove it through confession.

*For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than*

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*the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Heb 4:12 NLT*

The role of the word of God is made even more obvious in the way the Amplified Bible renders the latter part of the verse above. It shows that the Word *exposes, sifts, analyzes* and *judges* the thoughts and purposes of the heart. That is what it does. As the Word is coming into anyone, it is exposing what is still wrong inside. It will show the fellow what thoughts are still in the heart that are not in agreement with the will of God, it will show those secret faults and anxious thoughts. When it does this, what we are to do is to confess them as sin and ask the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing. This is so crucial. There is no other way to free our spirits from pollution.

After reasoning about it, I summarized the different parts of our lives that we need to deliberately consecrate into the following five Ms. They are our mind, our mission, our motivation, our methods and our material things. These things must be consecrated because it is in these areas that our spirits are contaminated.

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### **The 5 Ms: Our Minds**

The mind refers to the way we reason; that is the way we process information. It describes how the things we see or hear affect us. It is a fact that thought patterns determine actions. In Isaiah 55, the Lord said that Israel had thoughts that were inferior to His and that led to wrong actions. For this reason Paul called for transformation through the renewing of our minds.

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Rom 12:2 NLT*

Let me use the matter of marriage again as an example. A young woman who fears poverty, the type she grew up under, who had been told it was because of her father's poor paying profession, and who has made up her mind to marry a rich man, has a polluted spirit. She cannot discern the will of God no matter how hard she tries. Now, this may be a very quiet and spiritual sister in church. She prays much and leads worship, and everybody respects her spirituality. But deep inside is a contaminated spirit which is the reason she won't discern the choice of

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God for her in marriage. But the Father loves her and doesn't want her to perish, so to speak. So what He does is to send His word to her so as to expose that pollution of spirit. She stumbles upon books and messages teaching that prosperity is from above and not from man. She begins to hear messages that show her that her presence in the life of a man is supposed to bring him favour. The Holy Spirit makes it clear to her through different means that she actually minds the things of the flesh in that she is waiting to marry a rich man. He teaches her that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

The Holy Spirit goes on to let her see examples of persons who started out the way she is planning and who lost out with the Lord along the way. He does all these things because of the love He has for her. But no matter how much the Lord loves us, the final decision to repent and change our *minds* still lies in our hands. He can't do it for us.

What then is consecration for this young lady?

It is to accept correction. It is to confess her sin of having a wrong expectation for solving the poverty

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problem. She should look back in her mind at the suitors who she had despised in her heart because of their humble financial state and say 'I am sorry' to the Lord. She is to declare that she now knows that only the Lord brings prosperity. She should confess loud and clear that she has no more right in who her husband is to be than Eve had. She should declare that 'I will run with the Adam who the Lord made us to run together' (Songs 1:4). She should confess that, 'My life is not for the purpose of becoming rich, but to fulfil the purpose of God. It is not about me but about Christ.' That is consecration.

Another example can be taken from the issue of choosing a career or a country/city of residence for Christians. Spirit-filled Christians often make these choices after they claim to have heard from God, or followed the leading of their spirits. But like we have seen, these can be unreliable if the spirit is contaminated.

What are the possible contaminations of the spirit in this regard?

If a person believes that he or she can only prosper in a particular place, or in a particular profession, then

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there is a stronghold in that heart, and it is pollution of the spirit. When the Lord wants to show His love, He sends correction, and the believer starts learning the truth of God. He learns that promotion does not come from the east or the west, but that God is the one who lifts people up.\* He can do it anywhere as long as they are where He ordained for them to be. The child of God learns that people are not blessed because of places but that places are blessed because of people.

By imbibing the word of God, he learns how to wait on God, practice faithfulness and walk in faith. As he is learning these things, he starts to confess the old way out of his life. He repents of focusing on people, on places, and on certain professions. He confesses that God is Judge, and only He can lift someone up. He declares that he is not his own but must live serving the Lord in whatever profession or situation the Lord chooses. He determines to obey God no matter the outward consequences. He is no longer a slave to the expectation of man. That is consecration.

Absolute consecration is not possible without the infusion of the Word. It is only as the word of God comes in that light shines into every dark recess of the

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\*Ps 75:6,7



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heart where the spirit of this world may be hiding. When it does, we confess that wrong attitude, wrong belief, worry, etc., out of our lives. We admit to the Lord what our errors have been and ask Him to cleanse our hearts. The Lord then puts in His cleansing hand and purges us totally by His power. We do not accomplish consecration through struggling, but through constant learning and confessing.

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 Jn 1:9-10*

We must consecrate every part of our lives. I have used the two examples above to show how consecration involves our thoughts about life. We must consecrate our thoughts. We cannot have the political convictions of the world and expect our spirits to be pure enough to connect with the mind of God. Christians must beware of popular opinions around them. Sometimes when I hear Christians speak about the government and the destiny of their nation, it is just clear that they have been overwhelmed with worldly thoughts. And they are wondering why the Lord does not reveal to them

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things that are going to take place. He can't because they are not able to receive it.

We must keep our spirits pure from the noise in the world. The world is out there trying its best to pollute our hearts and spirits. No wonder Solomon implored us to guard our hearts above all that is guarded.\* The heart is the source of the waters of life; if we do not guard our hearts, our spirits will be polluted and we will constantly miss the plan of God for our lives. Those with the prophetic unction *must* strive more than anyone else to keep a clear head in the midst of the noise. The church as a whole is supposed to be a prophetic people. We all need to be careful therefore.

Many times Christians are so occupied with the media reports of what is going on in the world. They fear for the climate, they are afraid of wars and natural disasters. Recently a new fear was introduced to the world, that fresh water is running out, meanwhile all my life I have believed that water is recycled by natural processes. But they want everyone to start fearing for that now. We hear that bees will soon all die off and we will have nothing to pollinate our crops. There is a constant bombardment

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\*Prov 4:23

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from the media with things designed to provoke fear. O, fear is a major contaminant of the spirit. Believers must again consecrate their lives to the Lord so that living or dying, they will only serve the purpose of God. They must not fear death but rather fear God. The fear of God delivers us from the fear of death. We should never forget that God is the Judge and that the whole of life is under His control. The world tries to paint the picture as if they are God and they can take charge of things, but they are not. God is God and there is none else. We consecrate ourselves to fear God and Him alone.

Until consecration is complete our spirits are not undefiled.

# Chapter 7



## **The 5 Ms: Our Motivation**

Another thing we must consecrate or circumcise in our lives is our motivation for living. Like Kirk Franklin would say in that his song, 'What are you looking for?' As we will see later, the word 'spirit' has a wide range of uses in the scriptures and one of these is the use as describing the drive or motivation for what one is doing in life.

*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear? Prov 18:14 KJV*

In this verse of scripture above, what Solomon was teaching is that a person's drive determines what beating he can take. When one has a strong motivation, it is amazing what troubles and disappointments he can overcome. A footballer going for a goal may slide and fall as he is being tackled by opponents, but he won't remain down especially if he still has an advantage at a shot at the

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goal. He is driven by the desire for that goal and so gets up despite his injuries and despite his opponents. That is what is meant by the spirit of a man bearing his troubles in this context.

Even the Lord Jesus, when it got to that difficult time of going through the cross, He had to have a drive to get Him through it. It was very hard, so hard that He prayed to the Father to see if there was another way that wouldn't involve this accursed thing called the cross. It was not easy at all. But He eventually went through it. How did He manage?

*...Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:2*

He got His push from the joy set before Him; that was the spirit that carried Him through.

But, what was the joy?

We have often thought it was the elevation which the Father bestowed on Him afterwards; at least that was what I used to think. But that couldn't possibly be. Paul had explained to us that He already existed in

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the form of God, therefore this elevation could not be something worth looking forward to. His joy had to be something else. I searched the scriptures with the help of the Holy Spirit, and I found it. It is a fact that the joy of divinity is never from getting but is always from imparting a blessing. Divinity derives its joy from giving.

*The Lord says,  
"It was my will that he should suffer;  
his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness.  
And so he will see his descendants;  
he will live a long life,  
and through him my purpose will succeed.  
**When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish,  
he will be satisfied (he will again have joy):.**  
And because of his experience,  
my righteous servant will make it possible  
for many to be counted righteous,  
for he will bear all their sins.  
And so I will give him a place of honor,  
a place among the great and powerful.  
He willingly gave his life  
and shared the fate of evil men.  
He took the place of many sinners  
and prayed that they might be forgiven."*

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*Isa 53:10-12 (NLT, GNT combined)*

Reading through this portion of the prophecies of Isaiah shows clearly what the joy was which was set before the Lord Jesus. It was not personal gain at all; He was deriving joy from the deliverance from slavery and the fear of death which He would accomplish for us all. It gladdened His heart that as a result of His suffering many would be counted righteous. He would reconcile the whole world to the Father. He was glad that sinners would be forgiven and dead men would receive life. Many would be called children of God as a result of His work, and that made Him glad. This was what the angel communicated to Him in the garden through visions to give Him strength.\* The spirit that took Jesus through the cross was the intense desire to see the plan of God for these beautiful things succeed. Please read through those three verses from Isaiah again and again until that same spirit takes hold of you.

The desire to bless people through the completion of the purpose of God was the motivation of Jesus. He said it Himself, *'My satisfaction is from doing the will of Him who sent me and from accomplishing His work.'*\*\*

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\*Luk 22:43    \*\*Jn 4:34 paraphrased.

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Paul then said to the Philippian church, *'let this attitude that was in Christ Jesus be in you.'* When that same attitude is in you, then you are releasing the pure spirit so as to know the will of God.

But what might be pollution of spirit in this area for the believer today?

Many have their own ambitions. They want to make money. They want to be important. Many pastors are trying to build the biggest church or have the largest congregation. There is a lot of competition in the spirits of people. James said it even underlies the prayer points of many Christians and is the reason why they often do not receive answers to prayers.\* There is vain glory and ambition in the lives of many of us, and these are contaminants of the spirit.

We are to be like our Lord Jesus. Our ambitions must be primarily to be pleasing to the Father. The drive must be that 'I must work the work of Him who sent me.' The spirit must be to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please in all respects and to bear fruit in every good work. My motivation must be simply to be found pleasing to Him. I want to see the work of

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\*Js 4:1-4



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God prosper through my hands and through my travails, *even if I personally get nothing*. I want to be like Paul who also derived joy when his apparent loss was for the promotion of the work of God in the lives of children of God.

*But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice... Phil 2:17*

This is my motivation, and I say so by faith. By faith I claim that I have this attitude of Christ which Paul also had, in the name of Jesus.

That is cleansing ourselves of the defilement of spirit in the area of motivation. When this is done, then we can hear the true Spirit of God clearly through our spirits.

### **The 5 Ms: Consecrating Our Mission**

Closely related to motivation for living is the mission for which we are living; by this I mean the thing that we wish to accomplish with our lives. This too must be consecrated.

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
And before you were born I consecrated you;*

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*I have appointed you a prophet to the nations. Jer 1:5*

A young boy was asked, 'What will you like to be when you grow up?' 'I will like to be a man,' was his answer. Good answer, but the person asking laughed. The answer expected was for him to say, teacher, lawyer, doctor, scientist, artist, musician, etc. I remember in my childhood that I wanted to be different things at different times. The opinion of children is largely formed by the environment; it is what is portrayed before them that they want to be. But for us Christians it is not to be so. We must strive to be what the Lord created us to be and explain the same to our children. Consecration is to say to the Lord that, 'whatever you created me to be, that is what I want to be. Use me for your glory.'

It is consecration to know that you have not been called to compete with anyone or to prove anything to the society. We are to be like the Lord Jesus in that He said, '*I have come to do what was written about me in the book.*'\* We must dedicate ourselves to the truth that our own days were preordained.

Having this attitude opens your spirit to be able to

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\*Heb 10:7

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hear clear divine direction concerning where to go and what to choose as a career. Many people never even get any special kind of communication; they simply find themselves walking easily in the plan of God because they had the consecrated spirit ready to walk with Him.

You are not your own. Your own personal ambitions belong to the dunghill. You must determine that *whatever* He created you to be is what you want to be.

Eve is a perfect example here. Why was she created? It was to correct something that was not good in the life of Adam. She could not have chosen any other thing than to be the companion specially suited for Adam. Any other thing would have been going against the Spirit of God. That is just the way it is with all of us believers. Many of us move around life looking for where things are most comfortable, forgetting that purpose is the first thing about our existence.

Again, prayer is the key. Take these words to the Lord in prayer, telling Him that you are renouncing all the personal ideas, plans for greatness and for academic degrees you are holding on to. Tell Him you are ready for Him to use you for whatever He wants. Without

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this prayer of consecration, your spirit is still polluted and you are fooling yourself if you claim your spirit or the Spirit of God is leading you. The clear path for the Spirit to lead us is a mind opened through prayer and by understanding the word of God. That is what the Lord is going for.

### **The 5 Ms: Our Methods**

Another area in which we must purify our spirits is concerning the methods we are willing to use for accomplishing things. Many times Christians have the right motivation and the right mission but they unwittingly play into the arena of the flesh in the methods they accept. It is crucial we avoid this pitfall. The Lord is not only interested in what we do but in *how* we do them. David said it this way:

*Open to me the gates of righteousness;  
I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the Lord.  
This is the gate of the Lord;  
The righteous will enter through it. Ps 118:19-20*

Even if what we are seeking to enter is a good thing, we still must enter through the gates of God.

What is the gate of God? It is the method of God.

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David learnt a hard lesson when He was planning a good thing of bringing the ark of God back to its place from Kiriath Jearim. The desire was good but the method was wrong. They carried it wrongly and Uzzah died in the process. Later he corrected himself.

*He said to them, "You are the leaders of the Levite families. You must purify yourselves and all your fellow Levites, so you can bring the Ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. Because you Levites did not carry the Ark the first time, the anger of the Lord our God burst out against us. We failed to ask God how to move it properly." 1 Chr 15:12-13 NLT*

For everything in life, we must dedicate our methods to the Lord. Our method for getting results as believers is the method of grace. This is so important for us to bear in mind. It must be grace. It must be that we are obeying the precepts of God in everything and God is the one opening the doors. We must never use underhanded methods to get results for God. Paul said, *'we reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods; we don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God'* (2 Cor 4:2 NLT).

This is a major problem today. Many ministers do not

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realize that they must not twist the word of God to get money. They are so busy doing the work of God, as they think, that they feel anything that will do it would do. A leader in a church once told me about a practise in their church. They were instructed to always stand up when calls are made for donation of large sums. 'But I don't have that kind of money, some of the leaders protested. 'No, it doesn't matter,' they were told, 'you don't have to pay; it is just to stimulate other members of the congregation to stand up too.' I wonder whether those people know what it means to tell lies. That is a sin to say the least. It is dishonest and the Lord is definitely not going to accept that offering. Someone said, 'We are only looking for money to accomplish the work of God.' Wow! Does it not matter that God is glorified as we do His work? We are not allowed to use a wrong method in trying to achieve a right thing.

Please purify your methods. When we do not have a pure spirit in this area, we start hearing pastors say, 'God told me to take a second offering.' 'God told me to ask the first 10 people to stand up and give 10 million each.' Businessmen will start entering agreements that bring them under unequal yokes with unbelievers, claiming that their spirits told

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them. All is because the people have never said that 'Father, if you will not bring the money, we will not need it and we will not spend it.'

Churches and Christians have now gone to the world to learn their methods. PR and branding are now hot subjects in the Church, with branding consultants taking up a lot of the resources. Comedians and entertainers are now used to attract crowds to church instead of the power of God. The elders of a church will pray and the Lord will 'say' to them to gather money and hire the most expensive comedians. Their spirits say all kinds of things because they have not consecrated their methods to grace. That is why Christians are running to and fro every day, binding themselves to unbelievers, claiming their spirits instructed them to do these things. The name of the Lord is being put to shame again and again.

This applies not only in ministry but in everything else. Let us not be taken over by the way of the world. We must not lie to attract someone we would like to marry. O, there are all kinds of lies beyond lying with words. You can lie with your clothes, wearing things that make you look 10 times richer than you really are just to impress the woman. You may even lie with the

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kinds of gifts you buy the woman. You spend a whole month's earning to buy her a birthday present and make it seem like you could easily afford it. All of these are lies about your financial abilities. It is even possible to lie by dumping the blame for your interest in her on the Holy Spirit, by that putting the poor lady into distress for the fear of disobeying God. We must renounce all these things so that we can really hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

The businessman must not lie with his adverts if he's walking by grace. Forget what the world calls branding. Don't imply what you are not, directly or indirectly. Grace will then speak for you.

We must consecrate. We must say to the Lord that it must be by grace alone. We will have our boast in nothing else other than in the Lord.

What is the way of grace? It means we pray, we feed on the word of God daily, we sow the Word over the things we are doing with our mouths, and then we watch out for the doors that the Lord will open. While waiting for the door, we maintain a walk in diligence, in uprightness and in faithfulness. When He opens a door, we walk through it.



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# Chapter 8



## **The 5 Ms: Our Material Things-1**

In examining consecration, there are two sets of materials that are important; both of these must be fully consecrated to the Lord as part of purification of the spirit. The first material thing we must consecrate is our bodies. Remember that Paul specifically referred to the defilement of flesh along with that of the spirit in the second letter to the Corinthians.

A number of verses from the letters of Paul will help us see the mind of God concerning what to do with our bodies.

*I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. Rom 12:1*

*God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor — not in lustful passion like the pagans*

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*who do not know God and his ways. 1 Thess 4:3-6 NLT*

What we do with our bodies affect what our spirits can perceive and release. That was why Paul linked the two in 2 Cor 7. There is no holiness if it does not affect the body. The number one way by which bodily holiness is expressed is through sexual integrity. There is a teaching that circulates in the body of Christ once in a while in which it is taught that holiness is in the spirit and so what a Christian does outwardly doesn't matter much. This is supposedly because Christians are spirit-beings and so should focus on the spirit. The sins of the flesh, it is implied, do not affect the spirit. Well, if that doctrine is not a lie, I wonder what else a lie would be.

The Bible is so clear on what we are to do with our bodies and the effect that sin in the flesh has on the whole being.\* Our bodies must be deliberately kept in purity. We are told that anyone committing sexual immorality is defiling his or her body, defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord will judge such a person. Being born again does not make anyone immune from this judgement unless there is accompanying repentance and keeping away from

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\*Rom 12:1; 1 Thess 4:3,4; 1 Cor 6:13,18; Heb 13:4; Rev 21:8

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such. Being a believer gives you the power to walk away from sexual sins. We must fight every defilement of the flesh, which is primarily sexual immorality. A married Christian must be focused on his or her spouse and never have any bodily relationship with any other person, and must keep the heart free of such lusts. This is as simple as it gets.

Single people are to keep away from sexual contacts of all types until such a time as when they say 'I do' in the presence of witnesses. It is deception for singles to be taught that as long as they do not engage in traditional sex they are not involved in sexual immorality. Many doctrines teach that what is called *petting*, even including heavy petting,\* is not sin because there is no *actual* sex involved. This is a lie that can only be believed by people who want to engage in lusts while pretending to be obeying the Lord. I know of two different young women who became pregnant while they were still technically virgins because their hymens were intact. No, it was nothing like the Holy Spirit involved here; it was that they were telling themselves that as long as they were

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\**Petting* refers to the sexually stimulating and partially gratifying practice of fondling, kissing and caressing one's partner. The word 'heavy' is appropriately added for certain extents of contact, especially involving contact between naked skin.

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not totally into the sex act, they were free. But they became pregnant because of heavy petting. See, let us not fool ourselves, lust is lust, even if it didn't go as far as what we call sex in the traditional definition.

Sexual perversion, as defined by the word of God (homosexuality, bisexuality, incest, bestiality, etc.) must not only be kept away from in practice by Christians but they must also disavow them in their thoughts. The idea that the homosexual is hurting nobody is a subtle method by which the modern world is trying, and succeeding in many places, to deceive Christians into disagreeing with the word of God. We must not only keep away from practising these things, but also from excusing them. For us believers, the final authority remains the word of God, and not science or public opinion. The Lord holds us guilty not only for what we do but also for what we agree with, even if we do not do those things.

When our bodies are joined in inappropriate sexual tangles, our spirits become confused so that the voice of the Lord and the Holy Spirit do not come clear to us. Sexual immorality does not only leak the strength of the spirit, like it did with Samson,\* but it also

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\*Discussed in details in my book, *Beyond Gifts and Talents*.

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confuses spiritual discernment. The child of God finds it hard to distinguish between the voice of God's spirit and evil spirits. Sex is a powerful door into the spiritual realm; it is a door that we must guard with all gravity. When men (and women too) are involved in adultery, they open wide gates for evil spirits into their homes. Many men who claim witches and evil spirits are afflicting them make me laugh in that they go with their concubines to seek prayer for deliverance while their wives are at home. In summary, the 'witch' and the channel through which the evil spirits come into his life is the person who escorts him to prayer, how can he be delivered?

*Avoid immorality. Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body. Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory. 1 Cor 6:18-20 GNT*

There is no sanctification that does not touch the body especially in its sexuality. If you are praying for divine direction and you have not cured this sin in your flesh, please re-focus your efforts; your primary

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prayer must be to overcome sexual lust and not to hear God. You cannot perceive God correctly until this is taken care of.

### **The 5 Ms: Our Material Things – 2**

The other set of material things we must consecrate are our possessions, beyond our bodies. These are things that generally are acquired with money or which have monetary value. They include such things as houses, cars, landed property, shares in companies and other such valuables. Money is of course the master of them all. We must consecrate our relationship with these things. We must hold them loosely, seeing them only as tools with which to do the will of God and not the source of sustenance or security in themselves. We are to see them as they really are – vanity. Paul's instruction is so apt:

*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. 1 Tim 6:17-19*

The major manifestations of the right spirit toward money and material things are contentment and

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generosity. Being a cheerful giver is one mark of the person who is rightly related to material things. I noticed that the Lord puts giving ahead of any other thing when it comes to our handling of money. The world teaches us to spend on ourselves, save and then give from the remnant. But the word of God teaches us that giving is the *first* thing. Paul taught that jobless and dishonest people should go and work so that they might have what to give. When he wrote to the Corinthians, he pointed out that what God gives first is '*seed for the sower*' before '*bread for food*.'\* If giving is not *priority* in your life, then you are not rightly relating with money in the sight of the Lord.

Right next to generosity as a mark of a consecrated attitude to material things is contentment. Contentment means one is not preoccupied with getting more. It means to not look with envy towards those who have more money than you. It means to know your current financial state in life and to live like that. It means not to spend by faith what you can't give by faith. To be content means to know the real spiritual value of the things you are giving in exchange for more material things, and not to sell yourself short for vanity.

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\*Eph 4:28; 2 Cor 9:10



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*Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." Heb 13:5 GNT*

Contentment and generosity are two major things that show that a believer has a right spirit in this area. Greed is a terrible thing that pollutes the spirit of the Christian. It must be fought with the word of God and prayer. We must come to God and renounce attachment to material things.\*

### **Summary of these**

When we consecrate ourselves in these areas (the five Ms) and remove all the defilement of the spirit and the flesh, then the nature of God inside us, which is the spirit of Christ, will take over our being. Walking in love and being pleasing to God become the primary motivation for everything we do. These things come to us naturally when all the defilement are gone and we are constantly feeding ourselves with the word of God. Remember that every Christian has the nature of God deposited inside. John called it the seed of God. Paul called it the spirit of Christ and of God.\*\* It is inside us. It is a nature, not

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\*Please read about the Vow of Poverty in my book, *Grace to Prosper*.

\*\* 1 Jn 3:9; Rom 8:9

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a voice. See, it is not a voice in me that makes me not eat grass on the roadside; I don't do it because I do not have the nature of a goat, so to speak. In the same manner, a true child of God does not walk in sin. If he sins, it is a slip-up. That is why Paul would say he is *overtaken in an offence* (Gal 6:1). It is a fall for temptation. It is not his nature.

*Those who are children of God do not continue to sin, for God's very nature is in them; and because God is their Father, they cannot continue to sin. 1 Jn 3:9 GNT*

It is only when the spirit has been defiled that children of God start walking in sin and away from the will of God. So we see that when the defilement of the spirit is cleansed through consecration, then the nature of Christ takes over, and we are said to be led by the spirit of Christ. It is not primarily a voice; it is a nature. It produces desires, feelings, wisdom, understanding, confidence, etc. When necessary, it will manifest as a voice, intuition or a perception. That is the way of the spirit.

*To be 'in the will of God' is not a matter of intellectual discernment, but a state of heart. To a sanctified soul the will of God is its implicit life, as natural as breathing. It is*

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*the sick man who knows intellectually what health is, and a sinful man knows intellectually what the will of God is; but a sanctified heart is the expression of the will of God. – Oswald Chambers.\**

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\* *In his book, Christian Disciplines*

# Chapter 9



## **Having the Spirit of God and of Christ**

Earlier I mentioned that we will get back to the use of the word 'spirit' in the Bible. Understanding the way it is used will help us understand what it means to be led by the spirit, an expression that is often misunderstood among Christians.

The expression is taken from the book of Romans in which Paul wrote, *'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God'* (Rom 8:14). It is taken by many that the ability to perceive the voice of the Holy Spirit is a sign of sonship or maturity. But let's look closer at the scriptures and get things correctly.

The word 'spirit' has a wide range of uses with diverse meanings in the scriptures.\* Generally, 'spirit' denotes an invisible but real force or person that creates an effect. The uses include the spirit

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\*Gr *pneuma*. Vine's Expository dictionary of Bible Word shows over 12 forms of usage.

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(immaterial, invisible) part of man, the substance of the spiritual realm, and a spiritual being (e.g. angels, demons and of course, the Holy Spirit). Other uses include the power of God, a force, the wind, breath, life, etc. It is only by considering the context in which it is used that we are able to tell what exactly is meant each time. Writers would capitalize the first letter to 'Spirit' when they believe it is referring to the Holy Spirit,\* even though the original Bible text does not use capital and small letters.

Let us see this point from a portion of the letter of Paul to the Galatians.

*For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' ...*

*But I say, **walk by the SPIRIT**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the SPIRIT, and the SPIRIT against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But **if you are led by the SPIRIT**, you are not under the Law. Gal 5:14, 16-18 (caps added)*

What spirit was he talking about here? When he said

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\* The Holy Spirit, when specifically identified has the name fully written as such. Gr to *pneuma to hagion*.

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'the SPIRIT' he was definitely referring to a particular thing which his original readers could easily recognize. If you were following his thoughts carefully in the letter you would see what he was already speaking about. Paul was teaching them about the principle or force behind the Law, and he was saying that they should walk by that principle. In summary, he was telling them that the force behind the law is love, and every Christian must walk by love. The spirit of the law is love.

So we see that Paul was saying that every action of the Christian must be propelled by love for the brethren. If Christians are directed and motivated in their actions by the spirit of love which directed the writing of the law, then they are not under the law. That was the use of the word 'spirit' in that context. He was not saying we are to walk according to what we hear the Holy Spirit speak to us; he was saying we are to walk in love. Love is the spirit of the law.

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Eph 5:1-2*

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It is a similar thing that Paul was teaching in his letter to the Romans in the famous verse about being led by the Spirit of God. It has been used by many as the foundation for walking by esoteric feelings. They claim they are being led by the Spirit, but Paul was not saying that at all.

*Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the SPIRIT of God are children of God. Rom 8:12-14 NLT (caps added)*

'To be led' here means 'to be propelled, controlled, inspired and motivated by.' The SPIRIT of God here refers to the nature of God that has been birthed into us during the new birth, and we can easily see this as Paul was contrasting it with the sinful *natural* nature. The person controlled by the sinful nature does things that are in disobedience to the nature of God. The sinful nature makes him do things without having to 'talk' to him first; it is simply the propelling force inside him. The born again spirit in the heart of the child of God also works as a propelling force. When we cleanse ourselves of defilement, then the

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new nature forms our feelings and desires. We are no longer being led by the old sinful nature, but we are now said to be led by a different spirit. This new spirit is the new nature, it originates from God and so is also described as the spirit of God.\* Walking by this new propelling force inside us is the mark of the sons of God. *'For all who are being led by the spirit of God, these are sons of God.'*

### **In the Life of Jesus**

Let us see how the presence of this spirit that came out of God manifested in the life of Jesus Christ. Paul described it to the Philippians.

*Let this same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Phil 2:5-9 (AMP, NASB combined)*

The spirit of Christ is the spirit of humility. It is the spirit with the purpose of doing the will of God and

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\*Gr, genitive of origin



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completing whatever is pleasing to the Father. It is the spirit of obedience to Him. Those who have the spirit of Christ belong to Christ. Because they belong to Him, they are led by the same spirit and not the haughty, arrogant, competitive and selfish spirit of this age which is resistant to the will of the Father.

Are you being led by the Spirit of God? It is not about whether you heard voices or perceived rightly within you after praying. It is about whether your motives are right and self-sacrificing. It is about whether you are obeying the revealed word of God, and whether you are walking in love.

Many people who supposedly hear God these days are tuned only to what will benefit them. After a long time of trying to hear something, they hear a response like Balaam heard. A clear voice definitely, but not the will of God. But thank God we will not be like that.

# Chapter 10



## **The Precepts and the Commandments**

*Thou hast ordained Thy precepts,  
That we should keep them diligently. Ps 119:4*

We saw in the earlier chapters of this book that what the Lord wants for His children is that they walk always according to His precepts. They are not to be seeking special guidance in everything but are rather to seek to know His ways. If we want to walk in the will of God all the time, what we need is to have the right spirit, know the right precepts, and walk by them. The Lord doesn't want people He has to instruct in everything. He wants His children to know His ways. It is this knowledge of the ways of God that marked Moses as different from the rest of the children of Israel. We are told that even though the whole of Israel saw the acts of God, Moses was unique in that he knew the *ways* of God. I like the way the NLT renders that reference.

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*'He revealed his character to Moses, and his deeds to the people of Israel.'* Ps 103:7 NLT

Moses knew God so well, and that is the plan for us too. Many people would rather just be given instructions: 'do this' and 'don't do that;' 'marry him,' or 'don't marry her;' 'take this job' and 'don't take that one.' No, no; that may seem spiritual but it is not the sonship level. The level of sonship is to not only do what is right but to know *why* some things are right and others wrong. It is unfortunate that many pastors and prophets actually delight in having that kind of control over people; they like people to always come to them for a word when making decisions. This may be okay when we are baby Christians but every true minister of the gospel should be preaching and teaching their followers so that they will not need to come ask those questions after a time.

In the wilderness, Moses was making that mistake when it came to leading the people of Israel. He had to tell them what the will of God was in every situation. It was not ideal. God had to send Jethro to correct him. Jethro explained that the first step must be to teach everybody the general rules. The elders would solve disputes, and only difficult cases would

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get to Moses.

*...teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk, and the work they are to do. Ex 18:20-21*

This is the pattern of God for us even today. He doesn't want us going to ask questions in prayers concerning everything. He doesn't want us to run to the pastor or prophet for every decision. What He wants is for us to *know* His statutes, His precepts and His thoughts concerning how to live our lives on a continual basis. This will come only through constant learning.

### **The Key of Discipleship**

The first key therefore to learning to be led by the Spirit of God is to be a disciple. A disciple is a student. We are to be ardent students of the word of God. We are to get better in our knowledge of God each day. God has general rules that apply to everyone, and He doesn't usually answer those who have refused to pay attention to those general rules but would rather be seeking for special communications. It is the increasing knowledge of the general rules of God that makes for true spirituality. We are only supposed to

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reach for special communications when the general rules are not clear to us. We are not to use special revelations to subvert the general rule.

Notice what He said through David to us in Ps 119v4 which was quoted earlier. He said we are to keep the precepts *diligently*. We are to be careful to apply the precepts in all we do. We are to constantly check the Book for His principles to employ. These precepts are so powerful that if we were to keep them diligently as prescribed, we will *always* discover the specific will of God even without experiencing any special communications.

Just to use this simple example in the matter of choice making in marriage. If a Christian woman is single and a man is asking her hand in marriage, it doesn't require any prayer of enquiry at all if she finds out he is not a true believer. Her only prayer should be a prayer of dedication to the word which says Christians are not to be joined to unbelievers.\* This precept is so clear that the Lord will not entertain any prayer of enquiry. In a similar manner, a Christian man is not allowed to desire an unbelieving woman as a wife and is not to want any woman at all just

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\*2 Cor 6:14

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because of her beauty. The precept is so clear in the Bible that beauty is a vain thing.\* These are simple precepts that we must apply *diligently* and through prayer as we make decisions in life. When we do this, here is the effect:

*Thou hast ordained Thy precepts, that we should keep them diligently.*

*Oh that my ways may be established to keep Thy statutes!  
Then I shall not be ashamed when I look upon all Thy commandments. Ps 119:4-6*

The principle is this: if I observe the precepts and statutes, applying them diligently, then the day I discover the specific commandments I will find that I have been keeping them even though I was not even aware there were such commandments. The application is this: If I have a pure heart and walk according to the wisdom of God, which is the general will, I will discover that I make the right choice all the time as if I heard a specific instruction.

It is only when the known precepts do not solve an issue that we are to seek specific communications from Him (I will illustrate this in the next chapter).

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\*Prov 31:30

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Many times He takes the initiative and interjects with a special revelation, especially if our *diligent* application of the precepts does not lead us in the right decision. We will come to the examples of Abimelech and Abraham as the Lord intervened when each missed it while walking according to known precepts. When Abraham was getting it wrong with Hagar and Ismael, the Lord appeared and said, 'listen to the voice of your wife.' Abimelech missed it in taking the wrong woman, and the Lord came in a dream.

We are led *automatically* into the specific will of God when we walk diligently and habitually in the general will, even if the Lord has to intervene supernaturally.

First, let us see how the early church followed this principle of diligently applying the precepts.

# Chapter 11



## **Time to Make a Choice**

The way the apostles chose a replacement for Judas is such a beautiful way to illustrate how we know the will of God, make choices, and seek the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The whole story is in Acts 1:15-25 and I encourage everyone to open their Bibles and read it. But let me give a summary first and then quote a few verses from the context as we go on.

The situation was after the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus; they were tarrying in Jerusalem as commanded, until they'd be endued with power from on high. At a point, Peter stood up and informed the congregation that a replacement had to be found for Judas who betrayed the Lord Jesus and who was dead at the time. He went ahead to set forth some criteria by which they would choose a replacement. After *diligently* following the criteria, two men emerged—Joseph Justus Barsabbas and Matthias. But they needed only one person. So they



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decided to pray, apparently for the first time during this process, that the Lord would show them who He had chosen of the two men. To find out which one the Lord chose, they decided to do something similar to tossing a coin (that is what the so called casting of lots was). The toss of the coin picked Matthias, and that was settled. That is a simple summary.

Now, before I go on to analyse this deeper and have us learn our lessons from it, I want to just quickly respond to a teaching that says that the casting of lots for them was wrong and that God never wanted Judas replaced until Paul would come. From all the reference we have, Matthias was accepted by the Lord as His choice, and was later testified to by Paul as being one of the twelve; they were referred to as complete after Matthias replaced Judas (Please see Acts 6:2, and 1 Cor 15:5). Also, apostles are in different classes or types; what was being replaced was an *apostle of the lamb*, a class of apostles that required the person to have been an eye witness of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Paul could not have been a replacement because he was not thus qualified.

Now let us learn our lessons. I will outline the points

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one by one.

**Point 1: Peter Decided**

Peter did not pray to decide Judas needed to be replaced. He didn't ask God if it was His will that they picked a replacement at that time for Judas. Why didn't he? It was simply because he understood the scriptures. I believe the Lord Jesus had taught them certain things ahead from the Word.

*Peter continued, "This was written in the book of Psalms, where it says, 'Let his home become desolate, with no one living in it.' It also says, 'Let someone else take his position.' So now we must choose a replacement for Judas..." Acts 1:20-21 NLT*

He acted purely on the word of God as recorded in Scripture. He understood the precepts of God. Nobody disagreed with this. Many times people want to pray about what is so clearly stated in the word of God, but that is not right. You see a hungry man and you are praying whether the Lord wants you to give him something when it is within your power to do it. A man is jobless and broke and he is praying to know whether the Lord wants him to work. An unbeliever wants to marry a Christian

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young woman, and she decides to go and pray to see what the Lord is saying. A man is being offered a bribe and he wants to know if the Lord would want to use that to meet his needs. It is funny, but a young woman was actually asked during a survey if she'll be willing to sleep with her boss for the sake of getting promotion at work. Her answer was, 'I will do it only if God asks me to do it.' No, all these cases have been answered too clearly in the scriptures and we should never seek the Lord about them. Praying about them is called tempting the Lord thy God and also mocking Him.

Peter simply followed what the Word said to them when this time came. As you grow in knowledge as a Christian, you will know more and become better at taking initiative in things without long winded enquiry prayers. That is the plan of God. You will make decisions quicker with the Word and the spirit inside you.

**Point 2: He Set Criteria**

The next thing Peter did was to set criteria that would be used to pick the replacement for Judas. Again we are not told He inquired of the Lord. He just set out the criteria using his own sense, a sense that was

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trained by over three years of walking daily with the Lord Jesus. Looking closely at the criteria will show clearly that they were drawn according to purpose. The purpose was that the person was going to be a witness of the ministry of Jesus and, most importantly, of His resurrection. It was again common sense, derived from knowledge, that the following criteria must be fulfilled.

*“So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the Lord Jesus— from the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken from us. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of Jesus’ resurrection.” Acts 1:21-22 NLT*

When we get to understand our lives and the word of God better, we will be able to set criteria for things before we get to the point of decision. In my book *‘Should I Say yes,’* I told of the three things I wanted in a wife which I deduced from interacting with the Word. It made my life easier. It was not every woman I prayed about. Of course I was attracted to quite a few, but many of them broke the rules of God for me early and it was just easy to keep moving. Please note that our criteria must be based on the word of God for

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them to be valid. Like I mentioned, our criteria for a wife cannot include material things like the natural descent, matters of outward beauty, etc. We may have personal preferences but they are to be shut out of the list. Those personal preferences may be expressed to the Lord in prayer to see whether He will make anything of them, but focus must be on things derived from the Word.

**Point 3. They Applied the Criteria**

Armed with a knowledge of the kind of person they wanted, Peter and the rest of the disciples went through the whole congregation and found only two men who fitted the role. These were the only ones, apart from the eleven, who were there in the ministry of Jesus the whole time and saw everything. Those who went on leave for a few months while Jesus was around didn't make it. Those who were there the whole time until they went to the village to avoid the troubles around the crucifixion and so missed seeing the resurrected Jesus were also removed. They applied *diligently* the precepts given and only Justus and Matthias qualified. But they needed only one person.

Let us say they were 'lucky' to have arrived at *only*

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two options at the end, since choosing between two is much easier than if there were many left. You may be in a situation where there will be ten left after applying the criteria, but there is no need to worry. One of the ways by which the Lord solves this is to bring more information to you which will result in a narrower list. Many times as we are praying for divine guidance, what happens is that we keep learning more from the Spirit on which criteria to use, and we keep discovering the facts about situations. As this goes on, our choices keep getting narrower. Many times the choices are narrowed down to one, and we would have discovered God's choice. But for Peter and co, they had two men left.

**Point 4. They Prayed**

At this point they had exhausted all they knew of the statutes and the precepts. So they went to pray, apparently for the first time. The prayer shows that Peter and co realized that what was left could only be seen by the Lord. It was a heart matter.

*Then they all prayed, "O Lord, you know every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen as an apostle to replace Judas in this ministry..." Acts 1:24-25 NLT*

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Prayer is definitely important. Even though it was not mentioned that Peter prayed earlier than this, I am convinced that the attitude of dependence on God must have been in his mind, and this is what Solomon taught. He said to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and to lean on the word of God alone, not on our own appraisal of things. We are to acknowledge Him in everything, and He will direct our paths.\* I am convinced that Peter had this kind of heart all the while, giving thanks for God's guidance. But it was at this point He specifically asked the Lord for direction. The Lord expects us to reason with His word before we start asking for specific directions. *It is only when we are diligently applying the revealed truth of the word of God to our lives that we are ripe for answers when we ask for direction.*

Many people just want to pray and hear God, but it doesn't work that way. We are often guilty of spiritual laziness. Many of us may appear like we can pray, but we are actually lazy. We are too lazy to study the Word, we are too lazy to sit and reason with the Word, we are too lazy to ask questions about the situation so that we might judge them with the Word. All we want is to pray and let God speak, and we

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\*Prov 3:5,6

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think it is spirituality. But it is not spirituality at all; it is spiritual laziness, and is not the way of the Lord. He wants us to learn to make sound judgment. God wants us to learn what is right and apply it. It is only after this that we may start asking for Him to speak or use other spectacular ways to lead.

This was what James was also teaching when He said, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask...”* (Jas 1:5). To lack wisdom means that the person has come to the end of applying the sound knowledge available and he can't move any further. James said we are to ask the Lord for new wisdom at such a point. The Lord will gladly give wisdom through new insight, or He might just give a direct instruction on what to do.

**Point 5. They Cast Lots**

After praying, Peter and co basically tossed a coin and Matthias was selected. Wow! Why did they do this? Was it because they didn't have the Holy Spirit yet, like we often say? I don't think so. In fact the indwelling Holy Spirit (as opposed to the power for ministry which fell on the day of Pentecost) was already in them at that time, as it is in us today, because Jesus had earlier breathed it upon them.\*

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\*Jn 20:22



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They did it simply because the word of God says it works.

*The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord... Prov 16:33 AMP*

*We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall. Prov 16:33 NLT*

The Lord spoke in the lots cast. Let us bear in mind however that they didn't start with casting lots; it was the last thing. The earlier things were carefully observed before they came to the point of casting lots. They used scriptural reasoning, took steps based on spiritual wisdom and they prayed. Many do not follow that order, and that is why they miss it. Casting of lots did not pass away just because we now have the Holy Spirit; it remains one of the unusual ways that the Lord may speak through.

### **A Personal Experience**

I will tell an experience in which I and one of the workers at Kingdom-Word Ministries used this method.

There was a time we needed to pick a date for a programme. Two of us sat down and reasoned

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extensively on which dates to choose. We had prayed and committed the programme to the Lord. Then we reasoned like Peter and the rest about what we wanted to achieve, our other commitments, the dates available, etc. Let me just emphasize again that following God's plan doesn't mean we just pray and wait for Him to prophetically tell us the dates He chose; He may do that if He wants but it is not the usual. We discover His preordained plan through reasoning with our *sanctified* minds, just like Peter and co did. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost didn't take that away.

After reasonably eliminating some and checking others, we came up with just two sets of dates, and of course we needed just one. So we decided to 'cast lots' for the date which the Lord would want. The brother and I did just simple things like him closing his eyes and then opening them to decide in which of my fists I kept a piece of paper. We altered it again to something like me writing the different dates on two different sheets of paper, turning them over and asking him to pick one. We did these things three different times and came up with the same date again and again. We had a good laugh in doing it. I know many people would think it as not spiritual. They

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would rather we went home to pray and come up in our spirits which dates the Lord wanted. Well, that would work too, but it wouldn't have been more spiritual than what we did. In fact I think we chose the better method as it couldn't be polluted by our personal thoughts. The word of God is still true that says, '*We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall.*'

### **Casting Lots, Not Everyday**

Casting of lots is not a usual way for doing things on a regular basis, not because it is unspiritual, but because it is *unreasonable* most times. Most times, there will be enough information available to seek. For example, if you were to get to a junction on your way to a place you have never been to before, and you are confused, you are not going to start tossing a coin; it is definitely more reasonable and more spiritual to stop and ask people around for directions, or to use the GPS system in your car or on your phone. Yes, you trust the Lord is with you but you also know He wants you to use these available tools. It would be a different matter if you were lost in a forest with no gadgets on you and there was nobody to ask.

What you would notice, both from the process of

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choosing Matthias and from my story I narrated above, is that we first used our spiritual intelligence, we prayed and only used the lots method when we were down to only two options.

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# Chapter 12



## **Before You Pray, Beware**

There is a way someone might pray for guidance and the Lord would be offended. We need to understand it so as to beware. Ezekiel's prophecy is where the caution is.

*For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the Lord will be brought to answer him in My own person. And I shall set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I shall cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am the Lord. Ezek 14:7-9*

There was a situation on ground when the word of the Lord came to the prophet. People who were disobeying God in the way they lived would get to crossroads and then come to the prophet so as to

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know the will of God. They worshipped other gods but would come to men like Ezekiel to try to find out what the future held for them or how to solve a problem in their lives. Essentially, what was happening was that fornicators would come to the point of wanting to settle down, and then they would start praying for the will of God in marriage. People without regard for the precepts of God were spending all night asking the Lord to solve their problems. That was the situation the Lord was speaking to. Such behaviours kindle the anger of the Lord.

The summary of what the Lord was saying through Ezekiel is that we must satisfy the basics before we start making prayers of enquiry, and it is those basics I have been teaching in this book so far. We must cleanse our hearts of all defilement of spirit and flesh. Fornicators should not come to God to ask for His will concerning a marriage partner. Such a person will not hear God properly; the Lord will reveal to such a man that he should marry a Jezebel. Those who are just trying to get direction from God without the diligence to obey Him in their everyday lives are only setting themselves up for destruction. O, how great the error of assuming that God only speaks for each

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inquirer's benefit. No, He speaks according to the gods in their lives if they persuade Him to speak. But if we fill our lives with obedience to Him, He speaks good to us.

*I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying,  
for he speaks peace to his faithful people.*

*But let them not return to their foolish ways. Ps 85:8*

### **How Ahab Died**

If we fill our lives with idols, then we are begging for trouble; He will speak only according to the idols in our hearts.\* God's mercy does not mean we can live anyhow and still be blessed in our sinful lives. His mercy means there is forgiveness for us when we do repent, and there is power available for those who are interested in walking above sin. His mercy also means He tends not to judge in a hurry, allowing time for repentance. However, wrath awaits those who will persist in iniquity even if they profess to be believers.

*Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. For our God is a devouring fire. Heb 12:28-29*

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\*Ez 14:4,5



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We know that if people make themselves subjects of divine wrath, He will reveal to them how to die. They would think they are on the way to victory when actually they'd be on the way to destruction. That was how Ahab died. He neither feared God nor did he allow those who did to serve Him, yet he was asking prophets to tell him how his battle would go. 'No problem,' the Lord said; 'you want direction, direction shall you get.'

*And the Lord said, 'Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' 2 Chr 18:19*

The Lord commanded a lying spirit to enter the mouth of his prophets and they revealed to him that God wanted him to go to Ramoth-gilead. But it was only enticement to destruction. So it is with those who put iniquity before their faces and come to make prayers of enquiry concerning the will of God.

Many people are not faithful; they are lazy and dishonest, yet they are asking the Lord to reveal their ministries or businesses to them. Meanwhile the Lord is saying to them, 'Go and be faithful in that which belongs to another person, otherwise I will never give you your own.'<sup>\*</sup> A man, or even a woman, cannot

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<sup>\*</sup>Luk 16:12

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maintain sexual integrity, or she loves money, and such a person is praying to know which marriage partner is the will of God. This is the reason why many people have failed, even though they thought they had a revelation concerning what they are doing. But the hand of the Lord was against them. They came to prayer with idols and iniquity in their lives.

Idols are preconceived ideas in people's hearts. We looked at that matter when we were examining the matter of consecration of the mind (the first of the five Ms). If we do not remove these idols, we will be at risk of judgment.

This is why I am not impressed with whether you heard God or not. It is not possible to judge how in line with the will of God that voice of the spirit is when we are not able to judge your heart. I wish Christians would spend more time on the consecration and repentance part of prayer. I wish they would spend more time learning the ways of God through the Word. Many things would become clear so easily. God is so eager to reveal His will to us, it is just that we are often not able to receive them. We spend so much time practising how to hear God that

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we forget that if we are properly related to Him, we will not only hear Him, we will actually be *bathed* in His will. His thoughts will be our thoughts. We will be people who can make decisions on His behalf and counsel people so. When the Lord blessed Ahithophel with wisdom, the testimony was that it was as if one inquired of the Lord.\* These things are possible. Someone can be so filled with the wisdom of God that his simple advice will be divine counsel.

When you approach God in prayer for direction, your first set of words must be words that examine your heart to be sure you are actually idol-free and free of the stumbling block of iniquity.

I remember how the Holy Spirit guided me in how to pray. When the time for asking for direction comes, I start with confessing the word of God I know. I also confess away anything that I feel may be a hindrance to following Him. I say things like, 'Lord, I know I am not my own; I know there is a predetermined thing I should do and a place I should be.

'I know You are working in me both to will and to do Your good pleasure.

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\*2 Sam 16:23

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'Lord, let not fear or the cares of the world and such things cloud my mind so that I will not follow You.

'Help me to know what is true and in line with Your will.'

Many times after praying like this, the things just become clear on the spot. In fact I remember a situation in which I actually abruptly ended the prayer and said to the Lord, 'I am sorry for bothering You; the prayer is no longer necessary.' His will just became crystal clear. I knew there was nothing to worry about. So clear was it all of a sudden that I apologized to the Lord for bothering Him. I was walking on the road that day as I prayed.

O, how I love this prayer of David:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
And lead me in the everlasting way.*

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# Chapter 13



## **Special Manifestations**

*God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 1 Cor 12:6 NLT*

It is now time to look at the special ways that the Lord communicates His will and directions to us. We have established that the main thing the Lord is doing is transforming us into the likeness of Himself so that we end up as the expression of God in our everyday living, in our thoughts and in the decisions we make. We are in effect becoming the living will of God. Despite this primary purpose of His, special spiritual manifestations to communicate the will of God remains a common thing in the lives of Christians. Even though He does not expect them to be the *normal* way we make decisions, they still happen from time to time.

We can easily understand a number of reasons why these things must still happen. One is that we are not

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yet perfect and so cannot yet get everything right just by our spiritual reasoning. We are a work in progress. Also, it is not every fact that will be available to us when we need to make decisions. Peter and the rest of the church couldn't see the hearts of men when they wanted to choose a replacement for Judas. All the knowledge they had and all the scriptures which spoke to them eliminated most contenders for the post but still left them with two options. To move forward they needed to know the hearts of these men, but only the Lord has such knowledge, just as Peter acknowledged in his prayer. They came to the point of lacking wisdom, at which point James said we are to pray.

Another point is that there will be some things the Lord may want us to do but which may not be on our path, and may not come to our minds at all except the Lord brings them supernaturally. For example, why else would Philip join the chariot of the Ethiopian government official going on his own different way?\*

It had to be by a special communication of the Spirit. Beyond all these, there are things which just belong to the Lord Himself only and we cannot reason them out, no matter how much of God we become like.

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\*Acts 8:29

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They are called *the secret things of God* and can only be known when the Father chooses to reveal them.\* These are the reasons why He still frequently communicates His will through special manifestations.

These special methods are numerous. The list includes *strange* impressions in the heart, physical signs, symptoms in the body, dreams, visions, visitations by heavenly beings, operations of the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom (through the mouths of prophets and other people), signs in the environment and in the skies, etc. There are indeed many of them.

Sometimes I hear it said that God does not use some methods under the New Testament anymore because we now have the Holy Spirit. These supposedly out-of-date methods include things like laying out fleeces (like Gideon did in Judges 6), casting of lots (which we have seen the early church use) and asking for physical signs. Well, after reasoning from the scriptures and observing life's experiences, I can only say I do not understand it to be so. Of course we do

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\*Dt 29:29; Acts 1:7



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not have the Urim and Thummim or the Ephod,\* which were parts of the instruments of worship in Israel, but the Lord does still use signs to communicate with people, both divinely initiated and upon request. I heard the story of a man who asked the Lord for a fleece,\*\* something no one heard him say while he prayed. The next day he came out and found a real fleece placed on top of his car and he never found out who did it. I am fairly certain he used the term 'fleece' in a figurative sense when he asked for it, but the Lord must have had a laugh as He answered with a literal one.

Now, these things are not common and have never been, even under the former dispensation, but God does grant signs when they are necessary. The

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\* The ephod refers to part of the priestly garment. The breastplate, with the Urim and Thummim, was attached to the ephod. The names Urim and the Thummim mean lights and perfections. These are two objects, thought to be gemstones, which were kept in the breastplate of the high priest's garment and used by him to determine the decision of God in certain matters. The way they operated is not so clear but it is assumed that either they were cast like lots or they shone supernaturally to indicate different things. Ex 28:30; Lev 8:8; 1 Sam 30:7.

\*\*A fleece is a piece of material or cloth made out of wool and was what Gideon laid down for the Lord to pour dew on or withhold dew from as a sign that He was sending him. But now we generally use the term 'fleece' to refer to any sign that someone requests from the Lord to confirm something.

presence of the Holy Spirit does not at all imply that He has done away with physical signs. The problem is that many people are not truly yielded in their hearts to the Lord but are only using requests for signs to delay obedience to God. Some will request a sign before doing what is clear in the Word, but the Lord doesn't grant such. Others will ask for ridiculous signs that only demonstrate they have already made up their minds. Imagine a request for a sign that the sun should rise in the west tomorrow morning before the person answers the call to be a missionary. The Lord should change the order of the solar system because one person wants to know if he is called. As ridiculous as it may seem, people do ask for crazy signs like that. They want God to essentially turn the world upside down before they obey His call. In a similar way, imagine a man who wants to see birds fly overhead in the afternoon if the Lord wants him to marry a certain woman. Obviously he really wants to marry that woman, as birds fly overhead all the time.

See, signs are for when we really need them to help make an otherwise unclear decision. There are times a thing would have been clear but that the gravity is huge; at such times it is okay to seek to be sure the

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Lord is actually asking you to do it. Gideon was facing a mighty army of oppressors when he decided to use a fleece to crosscheck that he was not being presumptuous. The Lord was kind to him in that He gave him signs again and again to strengthen his heart.\* Gideon needed it. If we really need those signs, the Lord will give them, many times without our asking for them. The problem is that most of the times people are not actually ready to obey.

### **No Fixed Type**

Let me also quickly emphasize that we cannot put the Lord in a box concerning how He should communicate. Beyond that which we have already described as the normal and usual, there is no hard and fast rule about what methods He uses. Remember that the usual method is to make us become like Him so that our spirits are alive and innately able to know what is good and right, a thing we sustain through constant feeding on His word and constant communion with Him. Beyond this, how the Lord chooses to reveal things is totally up to Him. Many times He may grant our requests for signs but He is not bound to do so. Looking out for a specific method may only lead to frustrations. He

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\*Jdg 6:36-40, 7:10

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knows what to use at the right times; what we just need to do is to know how to recognize the moves of the Spirit.

It appears like each person will get to know the special methods the Lord uses for him at different seasons of life, as we develop spiritually. A method He used at a time may be discontinued as He decides that spiritual advancement has taken place or should have taken place. The Lord does not condone perpetual babyhood which delights in the communications He used in spiritual infancy. There have been times in which people thought the Lord forsook them because He stopped communicating to them in a particular way, but the Lord only decided that the phase was over and the individual should move on to things of maturity. It is just like a baby that is growing; the communication method between the child and the mother keeps evolving.

### **Qualifying for Special Communications**

We need to bear this in mind: For us to expect any special communications in knowing God's will, we must be people who have qualified for such because we are habitually walking in the spirit of Christ. We must be walking in love, in the knowledge of the

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Word and in the fear of God. Without these we are not qualified to seek special communications.

Also, special communications are usually initiated by the Lord. Many times they occur when we are not even expecting them. There are times we are seeking direction and so we are asking the Lord to help us, but many other times when they happen we are not seeking anything. Many of these times we actually think we know what we are doing. We think we know what to do, having thought everything through with prayer. We are so sure, even in our spirits, but the Lord intervenes and leads in another direction.

Now let us look at some of the various manifestations in details.

# Chapter 14



## **The Lord in Your Circumstances**

One major way by which the Lord leads His people is through their circumstances. Let's examine this well-known portion of Proverbs.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He will make your paths straight. Prov 3:5-6*

Because the KJV uses the expression 'He will direct your paths,' many miss the point in what Solomon was saying. We often think that Solomon was saying that the Lord will be whispering to you. Again let me say that the Lord speaks to people when He has to, but that is neither His method for every day leading nor is it what Solomon was saying here. There are two sides to these words of Solomon. One is that if we follow the Lord, His precepts will make us wise unto making the right choices. The second thing is that the

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Lord will supernaturally make what was a crooked path into a simple straight one. In making our paths straight, the Lord will often shut some doors and open others.

Let me illustrate with this example. Imagine that a young man, who had applied in several places to work, gets three offers at the same time. Of course he can accept only one. Let us imagine that he has thought with all the spiritual reasoning in him and he still can't make up his mind which one to accept. After praying about it, imagine he buys a newspaper and reads that one of the companies just got their operating licence revoked by the relevant regulatory authority. While he is still thinking, he gets a call from a second one telling him they had changed their mind (this has happened to me before). The young man is suddenly left with one option, and this is easy to decide upon. The Lord has by these occurrences turned a road with multiple heads into a straight one.

Another example is this: If a young man's spirit leads him to ask a young woman's hand in marriage and she turns him down, he may go back and pray. After praying and after he might have done what is *reasonable* in trying to woo the woman, and has

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exercised some reasonable amount of patience, if she still continues to reject his proposal, he should forget it and move on. No matter how much his spirit talks, the Lord has made his path straight. She is not the wife chosen by God for him to marry. Some men have very long patience in this area and will continue to wait for the woman, and that may be alright for them, but I presume that when the young woman marries someone else, the Lord would have by that made it clear to the man that she is not His will.

Many of us Christians do not realize that the Holy Spirit guides us through our circumstances. I remember how the Lord delivered me one day. I was asleep, and because of the position of the bed and my own sleeping position, I had a ceiling fan right above my head. If the heavy hub dropped, it would drop on my head. And that fateful day, it was about to drop.

Sometimes I hear people say the Holy Spirit is a gentleman and He won't force you to do anything. To that I reply that it wouldn't be gentlemanly for Him to see me headed for trouble and not forcefully stop me. If my friend was sitting unawares on a bomb about to go off, knowing this I wouldn't speak a language he wouldn't understand; I would fight him if necessary



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to get him off the chair. He'll thank me later. See, if you have indeed yielded your life to the Lord and are following Him habitually, He has the right to forcefully move you.

That day as I laid on that bed, I suddenly woke up with a sharp colicky pain in my belly. I decided to go to the toilet to see whether emptying my bowels would solve it. After that I chose to catch late night news in the sitting room while my stomach settled. I returned to the room shortly after to find the fan had fallen right on my pillow. The fan used to wobble just a little while it worked, and the little to and fro movement had slowly worn off a retaining bolt over a long period, and that was the moment it finally fell. But the Lord moved me out of the way. I therefore interpreted the pain in my stomach as being an angel *smiting* me to wake me up like he did Peter while he slept in that jail.\*

The Lord intervenes in the lives of his children through manipulating their physical circumstances. We just need to be discerning so that we do not fight when it is not necessary nor give up when we should be resilient.

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\*Acts 12:7

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My advice to children of God is this: do what is right to do in every situation you find yourself. Pray, declare the Word continually over your environment and circumstances, and commit everything to the hand of the Lord. After doing this, whatever happens is what the Lord is saying.

*Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what is good in His sight. 1 Chr 19:13*

### **God does Block the Way**

In the face of circumstances, do everything that you know is right, then let the will of God be done. Sometimes the Lord actually opposes our plans and it manifests through the circumstances. Jonah's storm on the way to Tarshish is a clear example. We could see the angel of the Lord obstructing Balaam's donkey on the way. That should have been a clear sign to him that he was not actually in the will of God.

Sometimes, Christians who do not understand this are so obstinate and stubborn. First, they ignore spiritual reasoning, then they neglect wise counsel, and so the Lord has to use circumstances to stop them. Even then, many will still go on stubbornly,

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and that is something we are warned about in the Bible.

*The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.*

*I will advise you and watch over you.*

*Do not be like a senseless horse or mule*

*that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."*

*Ps 32:8-9 NLT*

I remember a brother who came to me once for counsel. He was a professional who was determined to travel out of the country to greener pastures. Every time he applied for a visa, he was denied. Now, in those days, because of the relative value of the currencies and the poor pay within Nigeria, the visa fee was close to a whole month's salary. He had tried a few times and had been denied. Then one day he spoke with an influential rich man who offered to help him. He was to apply again. A few days before the interview he called the man to remind him that the interview was just a few days away. The person who picked the call informed him that the man died the day before or thereabout. That was when he became frantic. He came to speak with me. After listening to everything he had to say, I felt like asking

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him, 'is it when the Lord kills you that you will realize you should forget this trip, at least for now?'

Children of God often do not realize that God can in His mercy hinder us. Many people will go against all the signs and call it determination. This is one reason why we are instructed to give thanks for all things, and also that all things are actually working together for our good because we love the Lord and are called according to His purpose.\* We need spiritual discernment to be sure we are not fighting God in our so-called determination. I always say that the 'devil' that refuses to yield to the name of Jesus, probably is not a devil at all or it has the authority of Jesus Himself to stay where he is. If things do not yield to you within the ambit of practising the precepts of God and with prayer, then it is not the devil, it is God.

Sometimes I think of a man like Paul, I think of how he handled things that he wanted to do in his spirit, but which the Lord refused. He learnt to recognize the restricting hand of God. There were times he desired to go to visit a church, but certain circumstances wouldn't bulge, so he would decide that the Lord was not approving. He would simply

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\*Eph 5:20; Rom 8:28

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write a letter like he did to the church in Rome.

What do we do when circumstances are against us and we are not sure if it is God or only an obstruction we are supposed to overcome? It is simple; we pray. We should at such times examine everything about our lives and the project at hand. It is time to examine our motives and our methods. We seek the Lord in fasting and prayer until the obstruction clears or the real will of God becomes clear. It is not every obstacle that is the hand of God telling us we are wrong, just like it is not every open door that is of God. Satan may try to oppose, and sometimes he opens doors as temptations to distract us away from where the Lord wants us to be. The solution remains the prayer of dedication all the time.

### **Open Doors**

But many times, the Lord lets us know His will through open doors. Looking at the same Paul, there was a time he was plotting his itinerary, and we notice from the tone of his letter that the open door given to him by the Lord made his mind up for him.

*I shall come to you after I have gone through Macedonia... I shall probably spend some time with you, perhaps the*

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*whole winter, and then you can help me to continue my trip... I hope to spend quite a long time with you, if the Lord allows. I will stay here in Ephesus until the day of Pentecost. There is a real opportunity here for great and worthwhile work, even though there are many opponents.*

*1 Cor 16:5-9 GNT*

Notice how the Lord did not have to tell him to stay in Ephesus; He just opened a great and effectual door for him there, using the KJV expression. Even though he had many opponents, there was still an opened door for ministry. The opposition here was not able to stop the work, even though they were trying. This 'devil' here yielded to the faith of Christ.

Many things that we will have to do for the Lord in life will not come because we heard a voice or because a prophet tells us. Some will come like that for sure, but most will not. The Lord will just open a door and we will step into it.

Many ministers, and even business people, have found the assignments of God through this open door principle. Most of us started out in ministry that way; it wasn't because we heard a voice or had a dream or vision. The Lord kept opening doors and

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we kept stepping into them.

We must have our hearts open to recognize doors that the Lord opens. *The doors He opens are doors that move us further into righteousness and accomplishing the plan He has for our lives.* The doors are usually 'effectual' doors for working for him. They are not doors for 'effectual enjoyment,' walking into comfort and out of labouring effectively. They are always doors for more effectiveness. We need to emphasize this because Christians often easily declare doors for material gain as doors of God but are very slow to accept the opposite. The fact is that the doors the Lord opens are not known because of the pleasure they bring up front; they are known more for the opportunity for exhibiting righteousness and for fulfilling His purpose. It is the doors that Satan opens that shine bright with all the 'goodies' up front. They are traps of Satan when nothing more is offered to you more than greater material gain.

# Chapter 15



## **Spiritual Perception**

Still looking at special ways the Lord leads, there is an experience I am of the opinion is common. Let me use Paul's words to describe it.

*And when considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them, and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be attended with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship, than by what was being said by Paul. Acts 27:9-12*

Paul was observant of the situation and his spirit was troubled. He had a strong impression that the journey was going to be perilous. Now, this was not just about experience at seafaring since both the pilot and the captain of the boat did not think such a danger was imminent. In fact other translations use the word



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'owner' where we read 'captain' here. It tells me these two were experienced and concerned enough that if there was a strong risk at hand expressed in the observable circumstances, they would have agreed with Paul. I am convinced that Paul had an extraordinary perception here. It was something he sensed in his spirit. And he was right.

Sometimes we have impressions in our spirits as the Lord is trying to lead us. Here I counsel that such impressions should rarely be taken as instructions but as *cautions*. It should make us slow down and look again, or make us look in a direction we did not look before. It is *not* to be taken as the word of God. This is where most Christians make a mistake. They are taught that it is the way the Lord leads and so they treat such impressions upon their hearts as instructions of the Holy Spirit. This is the cause of so much confusion in the body of Christ today. If you have that feeling, it is better to say, 'I perceive...', or 'I feel impressed upon that...' Please never say, 'the Lord said to me.'

One of the reasons why I say this is because these impressions of the heart can be closely mimicked by very many other things so that many times they may

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actually be inaccurate. Many young Christian men have had such impressions with several sisters; the ladies turned down the marriage proposals and life moved on. These perceptions or impressions are things to check out, discuss with brethren and examine with Scripture as is necessary. Care must be taken especially when they concern major things like a change of jobs or marriage. But if it is a good and uncomplicated thing, then one can go ahead and easily obey.

### **An Example**

Let me illustrate. A friend of mine was in a church service and, during the time of singing and praises, he suddenly had the urge to give the lady beside him a certain sum of money. It was a sizable sum but an amount he happened to have with him. So, he turned to his wife and told her of the perception. She nodded. So he went out to his car, came back with the money and requested the lady in question to step out for a moment with him. She did, and he handed her the money with words like, 'I just felt like giving this to you.' The lady looked at him, grabbed his hands with the money, and began to weep. The lady was in dire need and the money was an answer to prayer. The Lord actually impressed that upon his heart.

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Now, that was easy to 'risk' obeying because giving is basically good. Would that response have been right assuming he was single, and the impression was something like, 'that is your wife'? Even if he had a friend beside him to check with, it would be wrong of him to take it as a final word. The impression should only lead him to start showing interest in the woman; other things would be necessary to bring him to the point of asking her to marry him. In the same light, you can't just resign your job because you had an impression you should; such an impression will have to be checked out and tested.

Christians should please stop saying 'God spoke to me' when such impressions come to them, no matter how experienced they are in it. It is a perception, and that is all it is.

### **Clear Heads**

It is a matter of fact that the more we reduce the noise and chatter in our hearts, the more perceptive of things we will become. The spiritual realm is real, and our spirits are actually the literal sixth sense with which we navigate in that realm. The physical five other senses, when they are too active, tend to reduce perception with our spirits.

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Many times people are taught to develop their spirits so they can perceive things more, but caution is needed in that admonition. All the Bible teaches us to do is to build ourselves up on our faith with the word of God and prayer. We are not supposed to be trying to probe around spiritual space; that would be needless involvement in mysticism. What we are to do is to learn to trust God more, know His word more, and walk daily in obedience to spiritual precepts. We are not to become *gurus* who walk about with spiritual antennae. Getting so much into spiritual perception does not mean you will become a better Christian, able to know the mind of God. It is an exercise in mysticism and you may end up being so full of spiritual information about things around that you become confused. It is very much like walking around with a telescope and a microscope. Yes, you will see more of the world around you, but of what benefit will that be to your everyday living? You will see so many microbes that you will distrust your food. It is better to live a life trusting God and full of obedience to the revealed word.

*Day by day*

*Dear Lord for these three things I pray*

*To see thee more clearly*

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*Love thee more dearly  
Follow thee more nearly  
Day by day*

# Chapter 16



## **The Voice of the Spirit**

Sometimes what rises up inside us is stronger than just an impression or perception; sometimes the Spirit may speak clear words to us in our hearts, words that are stronger than our personal thoughts. There are times it will seem as if one heard it with the physical ears. Most of what I will explain here come from my own experience and that of others; the Bible has accounts of similar experiences even though one cannot be certain that the people involved experienced it in exactly the same way. But we often read things like, 'the word of the Lord came unto me saying...' This is probably one of the many ways by which the word came.

Let me start by telling a story about Mary Kay Ash written in her book, *Miracles Happen*, in a chapter therein titled *You Can't Out-Give God*. She had been requested by the pastor of her church to speak so as to motivate people to contribute generously to the

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children's building project in the church. That morning, while dressing to go, it was as if a voice spoke up inside her with words like, 'offer to double whatever the amount they will contribute today.' According to her, if people say they heard God, that was her own experience of it. It was new to her, but she knew it was not her thoughts. She knew it had to be the Spirit of God. When she was called up to speak, after going here and there with her speech, she finally made the offer as instructed and the result was overwhelming.

Previously, on good days, they would collect about 500 dollars after much motivation, so no one expected the landslide giving that happened after her speech. They gave 106,000 dollars. That was the amount she had to match, and she also had to pay up immediately because that was what she required of everyone. The church committee tried to release her from the pledge but she refused to be so released, choosing instead to fulfil her word.

After receiving the phone call that gave her this information on the amount collected, she sat down thinking of how she would go to her bank to get a loan to pay the money. While still contemplating all

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the happenings in her mind, less than an hour passed, and the phone rang again. This time, it was her son telling her about recent developments in an investment she made quite a while before. He started by asking, 'Mum, why is it that everything you touch turns to gold?' The oil fields she invested in turned out to be good producers and her share of the profit in the first month was over 100,000 dollars. She said she paid her pledge with the fear of God and meekness; these came upon her because she had just seen the demonstration of God's power to bless. She explained, in effect, that success is a gift of God and that was why she said, 'You can't out-give God.'

I have told this story here to illustrate how someone may hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. A number of times in my life, words have dropped as if from heaven into my heart. I remember when I had to make an important career decision; the word dropped into my head like a coin into a box. It was as if I could hear the clanging as it hit the bottom of my heart. In another experience, I was standing and praying in a church prayer meeting, when the word entered, it was so weighty it knocked me into my seat.

One of my sisters spoke of an experience in which she



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went to a government establishment to see an important woman. Just as she was about to enter into the office, she heard the words, 'beware of the leprosy of Naaman.' The words were so clear she turned around to see who was there. In the course of the meeting, she was offered gifts of money with apparently no strings attached, but the word she heard was resounding in her and she knew this was not good money. The Lord of course knew what she did not know. These are a few examples and there are so many more to give.

### **Caution About Voices**

Again, a word of caution. We do not go around seeking voices, and every voice that comes must be judged too. Demos Shakarian, founder of Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, told of how the devil tried to distract him with such a voice while he was busy with an evangelical campaign. He was also having troubles in the home at that time—his son was quite ill, things were going missing mysteriously and his business was losing money on a daily basis. It was as if a great and effectual door of ministry was open to him like Paul, but there were many adversaries. The voice told him to pack up the evangelical meetings and go back home. This really

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brought confusion to him, especially as the voice came when he had just finished praying. It was as he was meditating that he realized that the voice was accusing and confusing. Then he recognized that voice! It was the one that had whispered to him a few days before. It was a voice that created fear, doubt, confusion and self-hate. According to him, 'these were not the signs of God's Presence. These were the tools of the great deceiver.' He recognized it as the voice of Satan trying to appear like the voice of the Holy Spirit. He rejected the voice, went on with the evangelistic meetings, and the Lord reversed all his troubles.

Kenneth Hagin also told of how he spent days waiting to die because he heard a voice quote a verse of scripture out of context: *'For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away'* (Js 4:14 KJV). It took him days to realize it was the devil trying to cheat him out of the healing which he had received by faith. He had been sick for months on the bed and literally died a number of times. Now here he was, having received deliverance by the power of faith, and the devil decided to fight through another method. That was when he launched the attack through supernatural

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voices to weaken his faith. It was through studying the word that the Holy Spirit helped him to realize it was nothing but the Enemy trying to deceive.

We must not at all wish for or pray to hear voices; if we do, we are playing with a dangerous thing. Our godless thoughts, aided by Satan, can crystallize into voices, so we must be careful. Everything must be judged with prayer and wise counsel, if necessary. The foundation of the word and a constant walk with God is necessary for us to be able to judge these special manifestations. There is no substitute for walking by the word of God and prayer.

# Chapter 17



## **Dreams**

Dreams and visions need no introduction. All of us have been dreaming since we were children. Dreams are pretty common, but they are mostly without significance. Some dreams have meaning; of these, many are easy to interpret while others may need prayer, meditation and counsel from others to get the meaning.

As I have mentioned, most dreams are meaningless. They often only reflect what the mind is dwelling on. These common dreams are just like irrational thoughts while one sleeps. We know the mind does not sleep as much as the body does. Sometimes it cooks up a load of nonsense.

*A hungry person dreams of eating  
but wakes up still hungry.*

*A thirsty person dreams of drinking  
but is still faint from thirst when morning comes.*

*Isa 29:8 NLT*

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This is why I recommend that Christians should not take most dreams seriously. Unfortunately, people are often oversensitive to dreams, especially if they have superstitious tendencies. They want to find interpretations to all kinds of dreams. I have observed that people are most sensitive to dreams that instil fear in them, but this is very unfortunate. Dreams are not supposed to induce fear in children of God. Dreams that make us fearful are likely to be either meaningless dreams which we are inappropriately giving credence to, or Satan-inspired temptations to fear.

One of the things that make people dream nonsense dreams and give the dreams relevance is pre-existing fear. Another is exposure to things that provoke fear. Such include watching horror movies, attending certain kinds of churches in which the messages are designed to make people suspicious and fearful; these messages are centred on the devil, enemies and the powers of darkness. Those churches that are always looking for spirit-husbands, spirit-wives and marine spirits are potent fear inducers. They create suspicion in people and turn them to paranoid cases. People who pay attention to them always start having funny experiences. It is the result of a play between

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their minds and the satan that wants to confuse them.

So, people's fears often speak to them in dreams. People dream they died, they lost their jobs, or that their children died, etc. But most of these are nothing but personal fears speaking up in the night seasons. Satan employs these things to scare us, and we must fight back with the word of God.

Sometimes the mind converts what is actually going on at that time into a dream. A good example is children dreaming of urinating, and then they wake up to discover they have wet the bed. It was not the dream that caused the bed-wetting; it was that the child began to dream of it because the body was doing it. This is why many people come with stories of 'someone touched me in the dream and I woke up with a fever;' it is also the reason why people who are sick with a fever dream all kinds of nightmarish dreams. It is the physical discomfort that plaques the mind at such times.

### **The Story of a Young Woman**

Once a young lady asked to speak with me at a place where I went to minister. Her problem was that she had a dream in which her mother initiated her into

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the occult by giving her an egg to eat. When she woke up, she noticed that the 'egg' was stuck in her chest. She wanted me to pray a prayer of deliverance for her. I told her I was not going to do any such thing. In fact I told her to leave my presence. She begged but I refused to pray.

I refused to pray because there was no substance to that dream. It was only a manifestation of the common but unbiblical beliefs around. Deliverance ministries are often centred on analysing those dreams and offering prayers of deliverance for *nothing*. They have a lot of patronage because those dreams are very common. I told the young lady that her problem was that she watched too many Nigerian movies with witchcraft themes. When people watch horror movies, which almost always glorify the power of darkness, they expose themselves to fears which often end up manifesting in funny dreams. Things portrayed in those movies creep into the minds of people. People don't seem to understand that initiation of such an adult, especially a Christian, into anything must be by her consent. No one can creep upon you in a dream and bind you in a covenant which you did not agree to. That is Spiritual Science 1-0-1. You don't have to know too much Bible

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to know that. Only ignorance makes people believe otherwise.

What about the stuff in her chest? I happened to have studied human physiology and psychology as part of my medical training, and I fully understood that she was just somatising her mental issues. We used to call it *globus hystericus*. There was nothing in her chest. In fact it was incongruous for something to be physically in her chest. After all, what she supposedly ate was in a dream and should have been a spiritual substance. But there was nothing. I explained these truths to her and if I remember correctly, I led her in a confession of faith. But I refused to pray specifically about her dream because I did not wish to give credence to a lie.

But that is all many churches and ministers these days do. They make such a big deal of those who have sex in their dreams, a thing that is universally common with young people who more or less abstain from sex. Single people who do not occupy their minds with other things may sometimes have sex in their dreams. It doesn't mean they have a spirit wife or husband, or any such thing; it just means they have very active hormones. Once they get married these



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things mostly disappear, and I think the reason is quite obvious. But many deliverance people have turned it to a way to convince people they need therapy, which they readily offer.

### **Symptoms of Mind Troubles**

It reminds me of the day I heard a herbal medicine practitioner describe the symptoms that show people might have a certain disease and that they needed his medicine. I laughed because every single one of the symptoms and signs he described were of the vintage psychosomatic\* type. It was Medicine 1-0-1 for me. Feeling of things crawling all over the body, vague headaches, loss of appetite, lack of sleep, etc. All these are symptoms of depression or anxiety, and do not have anything to do with the condition he was claiming was the problem. That is the thing with a lot of these deliverance people who go after dreams. They take common meaningless occurrences in dreams and turn them to symptoms of spiritual problems. How sad.

It is comical but there can be interesting significance

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\*A condition is said to be *psychosomatic* if it originates from mental or emotional causes even though it might have physical symptoms. The mind has such power over how the body feels.

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to some otherwise meaningless dreams. For example, if you are owing too many people, you are likely to dream of being chased by masquerades in your dream. It is the fear of creditors. If you are afraid to lose your job, you will probably dream of falling from a tree. If you are looking forward to human help, you will likely dream of someone pulling you out of a pit (I have heard this a number of times; it was making the rounds at a time).

The truth is that eating in your dream *most* of the times mean nothing. It does not mean you have any spiritual problem. So does flying or swimming in your dreams. If there are dreams at all, then it makes sense that every natural activity can be reflected in a dream, whether it is eating, sitting, driving, fighting, preaching, jumping, having sex, etc. These things do not necessarily have a firm set of interpretations. Many of them are products of the day's activities. I have seen people give lectures on dream interpretation, explaining what ships mean, what it means to sit in the dream, or the presence of crowds, etc. I wonder whether true dream interpretation could be so taught; it is not exactly a science, which will explain why Daniel didn't teach Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The Bible tells us that all four of

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them had good understanding in all fields but only Daniel knew the interpretation of dreams.

*God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. Dan 1:17*

### **We are Free in Christ**

Dreams must not result in fear. When they do, they are to be rejected. They must not attempt to undermine our faith in the word of God; if they do they are to be rejected and simply dismissed. If a dream reveals that you are under an ancestral curse or reveals the face of a relative who is supposedly the person casting evil spells on you, please promptly reject such as it is only a lie of the devil. Dreams that reveal things contrary to the word of God are lies of the devil. You are a victor in Christ and there is no enchantment possible against you. You are in a covenant more powerful than that which Israel had with God, yet even those under that inferior covenant were super-protected. Here is the testimony of the most powerful enchanter of that time about it.

*There is no magic charm, no witchcraft,*

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*That can be used against the nation of Israel.*

*Num 23:23 GNT*

Now imagine what a greater covenant has for us in Christ. It is a covenant established with better promises and with the blood of the pure Lamb of God. It is a covenant in which we are not only protected from outside but we have the Protector *inside* us. John said, '*you are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world*' (1 Jn 4:4). The greater one lives in every believer.

This is what is called the helmet of salvation. It means to interpret everything in light of what the Father has done for you in Christ. It means never to accept that you are cursed when the Word says you are blessed. It means never to agree that your uncle or auntie was revealed as the cause of your problems when the word of God has revealed that it is the devil that is our adversary. The Lord will never in a dream point out a person as the enchanter or diviner who is afflicting you, because He Himself has told us that our fight is not against people but against spiritual forces like the devil and his lieutenants.\* You must have basic

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\*Eph 6:12

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spiritual understanding to be able to handle common dreams, otherwise the devil will cause you confusion.

Please bear in mind that I am speaking about the life of Christians. My message applies to those who are covered by the blood of Jesus and who abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Many people confuse the experience of unbelievers who are under bondage to Satan with that of believers who have indeed been set free in Christ. If you are dealing with an unbeliever, please do not offer them anything more than salvation to be found in Christ. That is where overall safety is.

The general attitude a believer should have towards every dream, meaning or no meaning, is to interpret it in the light of the revealed word of God.

# Chapter 18



## **Revelatory Dreams and Visions**

*And it will come about after this  
That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind;  
And your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
Your old men will dream dreams,  
Your young men will see visions. Joel 2:28*

We have seen that there are many meaningless dreams, but there are of course the ones that are actually communications of the Holy Spirit to us. I call these *revelatory* dreams. The Bible has so many examples of them. From the Scriptures and from experiences, both mine and that of others, I can say that dreams are used to bring correction to us, to give direction concerning the future and to explain some things that are currently happening. Joseph was instructed twice in dreams concerning how to handle Mary and her son. The first time, the angel spoke to him in a dream not to put away his wife to be, and the second time, he was instructed to take the child and

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the mother and run to Egypt.\* In Acts chapter 16, Paul and his company were directed to Macedonia through what was most likely a dream. This was after the Holy Spirit had blocked their way into two different places they had wanted to preach in.

I have personally been guided by dreams many times in life. A dream helped me understand the delay I had in starting out in ministry. I remember walking down a long and narrow alley, and every door I tried to take out of it was closed. In the dream I kept walking until I began to get frustrated, and I told the Lord as much, then I took a turn, found an open door, and entered a place where a few people were gathered in a meeting. Without that dream which occurred some 8 years before I started ministry, I wouldn't have understood divine timing. Dreams have also been employed by the Lord to correct me concerning several issues at various times.

Some revelatory dreams are easy to understand because of the direct nature, some require good knowledge of the scriptures to decode them, while some others require prayer and waiting on the Lord. A number will be interpreted only by the operation of

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\*Matt 1:20; Matt 2:13

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the Spirit in a *word of wisdom*.

The problem oftentimes is to decide whether a dream is meaningless or revelatory. For people whose minds are not plagued with unnecessary fears, it is easy enough to know whether a dream is meaningless or revelatory. On my part, I ignore most dreams because I realize they are not significant, but I know when to think about others. When dreams have been revelatory to me, I knew they were such immediately after waking up. For most I understood the meaning immediately, while for the rest it took me time to get the meaning.

My advice to Christians is that if a dream brings fear, it is to be rejected with the word of God, unless it is godly fear that is produced. By godly fear I mean a call to repentance and intercession. If it appears to have a meaning, then seek godly counsel if the meaning doesn't immediately come to you. Dreams that come to give direction are usually straight forward to grasp, just like Paul being told to come over to Macedonia and help.

## **Visions**

Let us now look at visions.



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Concerning the leading of Paul and company to Macedonia, I mentioned earlier that it was most likely a dream. The Bible actually says Paul was led through a vision in the night.

*And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:9-10*

This could have been a vision that occurred in the period of night, or it could have been a dream. I suppose it was a dream. Actually, revelatory dreams are called 'visions of the night' in the Bible.\* It seems to me therefore that the main difference between a vision and a dream is whether the person was awake at the start of the experience or he was asleep. A vision is therefore like dreaming without being asleep.

Dreams vary in the vividness with which they appear to us, and in the same manner visions appear in

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\*Job 33:15; Is 29:7; Dan 7:1

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different types.\* In whichever way they appear, when the Lord gives revelations through dreams and visions, they serve the same purposes I mentioned earlier. They may give direction of what to do, as occurred with Paul's company in being led to Macedonia, and Ananias in being led to minister to the newly converted Saul (Acts 9:10). Visions and revelatory dreams also inform about the future, even when not giving specific instructions concerning what to do. Daniel's numerous dreams and visions are good examples as are Joseph's dreams of stars and sheaves (Gen 37:7,9). These things also make the present clear to us, and they serve as the Lord's means of warning and of correction many times. Both the Magi and Joseph were warned through dreams concerning how to avoid Herod's plots concerning the new baby Jesus.\*\*

As I earlier mentioned while talking about dreams, these revelations coming through visions and dreams may be clear and easy to understand, but some are delivered in coded form requiring much prayer and wise counsel to interpret, some being only

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\*Kenneth E. Hagin described different categories of visions. For more on it please see his book, *I Believe in Visions*; a detailed description is beyond the scope of this book.

\*\*Matt 2:12, 19-22

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interpretable through the operation of a word of wisdom. Whichever way they come, I counsel that people always take these things to the Lord in prayer before acting upon them.

Many revelations are designed to not be understood until the events contained therein begin to happen. Such are said to be 'sealed' and are often given only to later give a hindsight confirmation to the believer about what the Lord is accomplishing.

Revelatory dreams and visions are *always* initiated by the Lord. There is no way we can decide when they should happen, and we are not even allowed to ask for them. There is no method for dreaming on demand or seeing visions on demand.

Let me point out that these forms of revelations are very common manifestations in the lives of prophets who by divine assignment take the Lord's messages to people (as we will see later), but are not as frequent in the lives of the average believer.

### **Visitations**

Visitations are another special manifestation of the guidance of the Spirit. There are times people are

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visited by angelic beings. Most of the times this happens, it happens in the context of a vision or revelatory dream, but there are times that we may be visited by angels, or even the Lord Jesus Himself, and it wouldn't be a dream or a vision. They will appear like normal people who blend quite well in the society. When the Lord and the two angels appeared to Abraham on their way to Sodom and Gomorrah, it was not a vision at all.

*The Lord appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent... He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them... Gen 18:1-2 NLT*

When Joshua met the captain of the host around Jericho, it was not a vision.

*While Joshua was near Jericho, he suddenly saw a man standing in front of him, holding a sword. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you one of our soldiers, or an enemy?"*

*"Neither," the man answered. "I am here as the commander of the Lord's army." Josh 5:13-14 GNT*

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Angelic beings take up bodily forms again and again. When they do, they appear to us as normal everyday persons. Until they introduce themselves or in some cases afterwards, we may not be aware of their true nature. In fact the Bible therefore warns us to *'not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.'* Heb 13:2.

Space wouldn't allow me to start telling stories of persons I know well who have had these encounters. All of them only realized what happened after the event was over. Most of these encounters involved deliverance in the time of trouble but also to give direction to the lost. They are a part of life.

One day, I preached along these lines, several people came to me afterwards to tell their angel stories. A striking one was the brother who a man led to the Bible class. A stranger just told him, 'follow me,' and he was surprised that he followed. He followed to the hall we meet in, and that was the last day he saw him. There are so many stories. These angels live among us essentially. I personally believe that Adam had quite a number of them for company; it was not just him and Eve moving then around on the earth. Angelic beings were normal with them, and even the Lord

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used to come around once in a while. Remember that they were able to hear and recognize the sound of His footsteps as He approached in the cool of the evening (Gen 3:8). Science and history make it appear as if early men were fumbling around and experimenting till they learnt how to do things like cooking or smelting iron. They say Man was first a hunter-gatherer before settling down to farming. Big lie! From the beginning, the Lord told him to cultivate a garden. He learnt how to tend crops from the very beginning. It is impossible to learn iron smelting by chance. Angels taught those folks what to do and how to do them.

The point I am making is that sometimes the Lord will send His angels to appear to us in physical form and give us directions, and He may even show up Himself. We are not allowed to ask for it, and we can't force it to happen, but we must know it happens and should not be alarmed when we do experience it. It is not necessarily a mark of spirituality if you are visited by angels; it is just one of those things that may happen as the Lord chooses.

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# Chapter 19



## **The Prophet's Ministry**

*And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints... Eph 4:11-12*

A prophet is someone who supernaturally receives a message from the Lord for someone, a group of people, the church or a nation. A prophet is not just any preacher. Preachers generally speak the general word of God, but a prophet is sent again and again by the Lord with a specific word at a specific time. A prophet therefore experiences a lot of supernatural communications as part of the ministry. Dreams, visions, visitations are things that are common with prophets. Even though any person may experience these things once in a rare while, it tends to be more regular with the prophet. When people who are not prophets receive these manifestations of the spirit, the messages tend to be personal, but prophets generally receive these as tools of ministering to other



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people. The main thing about a prophet is that he or she receives a specific message from God for onward delivery to people.

There are those who teach as if prophets do not exist these days, but that is not founded on Scripture. As we see in the verse of scripture quoted above from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, it is a ministry gift that the Lord sent for the perfecting of the saints and it is in full manifestation even today. There are many credible prophets who bring the word of God to us even today. One must of course accept that there are many charlatans out there calling themselves prophets, but indeed there are genuine ones.

There are many people out there who practice divination and shamanism,\* and by reason of their often accurate predictions they confuse many Christians. Being able to see into the realm of the spirit and also to accurately predict something does not make a person a true prophet. The fact that a person has supernatural knowledge, like being able

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\*Shamanism can simply be described as the non-Christian practise of communicating with the spirit world. The people use chants, objects and sacrifices to communicate with the spiritual realm and by that often also attempt to manipulate physical things, including bodies (sometimes for healing) and even the weather. Common

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to find missing things or know things about people do not make such a person a prophet. There are two related ways by which one can do these things without being a prophet and without even having the Spirit of God. One way is to learn *spiritism* or shamanism, and the second way is to possess a certain type of evil spirit. This spirit is described as a divination spirit or a familiar spirit. These are the two closely related methods employed by witch doctors and false prophets to impress people.

The book of Acts (in chapter 16) has the story of a certain slave girl who had such a spirit of divination in her and who was making money for her masters because her predictions and knowledge were accurate, yet Paul cast out the demon by the power of the name of Christ. But many Christians these days are so ignorant of these operations that they follow anyone who can 'see' things. These people try to make a reputation for themselves using their predictions. For this reason many so-called churches are all over the place, proclaiming the name of Jesus to appear

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words used for this include magic, witchcraft and sorcery. These practises of course involve demonic spirits and are specifically prohibited by the Lord. Israel was taught not to tolerate them in the least (Lev 19:26; Ex 22:18). Simon was a practitioner before he believed (Acts 8:9).

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like genuine churches of Christ, but operating familiar spirits to get results. Many of these grow into large denominations with branches world-wide. Their shamanic practises are always clear when you get closer. Many operate animal sacrifices,\* bath in rivers at odd hours and use a lot of fetish things in prayer. Intense fasts and long nights of prayers are also very common with them. Those long fasts and vigils appear christian but are nothing but shamanic practises found in most mystic religions, such as Hinduism. Beware of extreme self-denial in the name of righteousness; it is as anachronistic as animal sacrifices in Christianity.

*These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. Col 2:23*

Once you are following anyone for signs and not for the love of righteousness, then you are likely to be

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\*Animal sacrifices have no place under the New Covenant; they have been totally done away with. As soon as Jesus Christ was sacrificed on that Cross, the need for any form of animal sacrifice was wiped away. Every animal sacrifice was a type of the real thing, and Jesus on the Cross is the real thing. It is pure anachronism to speak of Christianity and animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices is of the old order; Christianity is the New Order. See Heb 10:8-10

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captured by these false prophets. Don't follow anyone because they supposedly have power but rather because they are leading you deeper into the righteousness that is in Christ.

Having said that briefly, in this book we are looking at guiding our lives in the knowledge of the will of God, so we will examine the role of genuine prophets in the area of personal guidance.

### **The Primary Duty of Prophets**

First, it is not the duty of prophets to be giving predictions. I see that joke these days in which prophets compete at the beginning of each year to foretell what the year holds. It is sad that even genuine preachers feel like they must get involved in these things. They predict the results of elections, the outcome of games, deaths and calamities for the following year, etc. See, even though the Lord does reveal the relevant ones of these things when necessary, it is not part of the prophetic office to be foretelling the future. It is false prophets that make these things their trademark.

A true Christian prophet waits for the Lord to see what He will reveal. A true prophet carries a message

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from God to people. The usual day to day message of a prophet is a call to righteousness and true spirituality. A prophet does not get up every day bringing special messages from God. On a regular basis, the prophet preaches or teaches righteousness from the scriptures like every other preacher. Sometimes he is not even a regular preacher but a regular worker like Daniel in Babylon. Then, here and there, the Lord gives him or her a special message. The messages of a true prophet are usually laced with the threads of the call to righteousness. They do not brag about their prophetic proficiency.

As for personal guidance, the Lord did not put prophets in the church for them to be the source of divine guidance on a regular basis. We are *not* supposed to ask prophets for what the Lord may want us to do. If a prophet has a word for you, it will be initiated by the Lord, and not because you poked the prophet to get a word from the Lord for you. The prophet's ministry is to build up each believer, not to be the source of divine guidance.

There are churches that have the practice in which members approach prophets to get approval before they do anything important. They want to know if

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they should travel, who they should marry, which job appointment they should take, etc. Seeking godly counsel is definitely a good and necessary thing for believers to do, but going to prophets, or even pastors, to determine the will of God in the decisions we are faced with is definitely not Christianity.

The reason people love to go to prophets to obtain the knowledge of the will of God is that they are lazy or they have no confidence in their own relationship with the Lord. They often are too lazy or too ignorant of spiritual things to take time out to pray and meditate until they discern what the Spirit is saying to them as the will of God. It is much easier to turn to a 'prophet' and then let him tell what he thinks God is saying. This is not why the Lord put prophets in the body of Christ. Prophets were put in the body of Christ to help saints mature through instructions in righteousness and not to keep them in perpetual dependency as of childhood.

### **Counsel, not Prophecy**

Let me state again that we can ask for counsel, in which case we are learning as we are receiving direction, but we cannot go and ask for direction on personal choices from a prophet; that is definitely not

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Christianity. The prophet also should not have the impression that this is his job. A prophetic gift is not something the prophet can provoke anytime he wants; it is the Lord who initiates the communication. If you go to a prophet, what a genuine and mature one will most of the times do is to give you wise counsel, and that is all that is possible. If in the process the Lord chooses to release a special word, then it is good. A word on demand has never been the life of a true prophet, especially in the New Testament. There is not one place in the whole of the New Testament where someone went to a prophet to get direction concerning what to do. Those were the things done when everybody was in darkness and only the prophets had a bit of light. Now, we Christians all have the Spirit of God in us and we must walk like that and not go around visiting prophets looking for direction.

Many Christians' lives are controlled by familiar spirits and human spirits because they keep going to prophets to ask these questions, and this is not what Jesus died to produce. You see them carry pictures and names of potential spouses to a 'man of God' to pray and see if this is the choice of the Lord. They put every business plan down to get the approval of the

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man of God. The fellow prays and then tells them whether God approves or not. That is NOT supposed to be the life of the Christian. Please, go to your minister to pray and to get wise counsel when necessary, that is all you are supposed to do. He is not supposed to judge all your major decisions for you. If the Lord has a warning or encouragement for you, then He will send it through different ways, and if He wishes He may use that preacher.

### **When Prophecies Come**

Sometimes of course, the Lord sends a word through a prophet. The Lord speaks to the prophets through voices, visions or visitations. Sometimes the person who the message is for has been praying, and at other times there is not even a question in his or her heart, but the Lord sends the word anyway. Words like that are usually to give fresh direction, for correction or to give encouragement to a fainting heart.

Sometimes prophecies come to us and we don't like what it is saying. At such times it is telling us to go against what we actually want to do or asking us to start something we do not have any wish for. Many simply discard such prophecies, but we must never do that. If in doubt, we are to take the prophecy to the



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Lord in prayer. Every prophecy must of course be tested with the word of God. Be wary of prophecies given by strangers unless they confirm something you already know. You must never make major changes in your life only because of the word of a prophet. The words of prophets either call you back to the righteousness already revealed in the written word of God, or confirms something that you already know within you. Also, the word may sometimes come to expose something that is hidden in your heart. This you will also know with some prayerful introspection.

# Chapter 20



## **When Non-Prophets Prophesy**

A very common way by which prophecies come to us is through a word of knowledge. Usually, when a prophet speaks, he tends to address someone or a group of persons and is conscious he is delivering such a message. But there are times a preacher is preaching and without being deliberate about it takes up your life, describes it, and gives divine direction in the process. This is a manifestation of the Spirit. Many times the preacher just wants to make an illustration yet he ends up describing accurately someone's situation and gives divine direction concerning what to do. Many of us have been in such situations. As a preacher, it is too common for me to finish preaching and someone comes to me to say, 'Sir, you were describing my situation today.' Note that this is not just coincidence; it is a manifestation of the spirit. Many times as I am preaching, I get the conviction that I am speaking to someone, and that the person is right there in the congregation. All these are

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manifestations of the word of knowledge. It is one way by which the Holy Spirit gives direction to the children of God. At such times, if the word is yours, there will be an instant recognition in your heart.

Another type I have seen is a situation in which the person speaking is not preaching, yet the Lord speaks through him. The story was told by David Pawson\* of how he got confirmation of the plan of God for him to go into the ministry of teaching the word. On that fateful day he prayed to the Lord to let him know what He wants him to do. He promised the Lord he would obey if only the Lord would make His will clear. There were two choices before him; he was already a farmer, he loved farming and was at that time studying in the university for a degree in Agriculture, but he also felt a pull to the pulpit. What did the Lord want? He asked the Lord to please answer before 12 midday that day.

That morning as he spoke with a fellow student, the young man said to him, 'I don't see you finishing behind the plough; I see you ending up behind the pulpit.' Pawson said to the Lord, 'That is not clear enough.' Then 30 minutes before 12 o'clock he saw an

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\*[davidpawson.org](http://davidpawson.org)

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old preacher he hadn't seen in years. As soon as he saw the man, without replying Pawson's greeting he shouted out at him, 'David, why are you not yet in the ministry?' That was clear enough to him as the word of the Lord.

I also had a similar experience when I was praying about whether it was the will of God for me to move from Lagos to Enugu. It was to be quite a drastic move seeing that I had only been to Enugu once before in my entire life, and that was to attend a Christian conference while I was a student in the university. The decision was being made as a recently married man, and I had to decide the direction our lives as a couple would head. I already understood that where the Lord would lead us to next would be the place I would start my preaching ministry. Among other doors that were opening, Enugu was standing out more but I needed to be sure, and so I was praying and watching out for the confirmation of the Lord.

Then on this day I ran into a brother who I hadn't seen in years. After talking generally for a few minutes we kind of ran out of what to say, so there was a pause. Then he opened his mouth and wonders began to happen. Out of the blues he began to talk about

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Enugu, how nice the place is and how it is a place a man would want to live. I looked at him with amazement while I quickly played back our short preceding conversation in my head. I had said nothing at all about my plans. I did not at all hint him that I was considering moving to Enugu. In fact, Enugu did not at all come up in our conversation before this point. He just started talking about Enugu for no apparent reason. I took that as the confirmation I needed from the Lord.

# Chapter 21



## **Beware of Divination**

I want to conclude this book by warning about divination.

*When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you... one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer... For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. Deut 18:9-12*

Divination has been correctly described as the practice of attempting to foretell the future or discover hidden knowledge by occult or supernatural means. Christians must be reminded that things like palm reading, horoscopes, crystal ball, etc., are all forms of divination which the Lord warns against. We are not to participate in these

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things in any way, not even for the fun of it. They constitute nothing more than the invocation of demonic powers. Derek Prince called them Satan's traps. They are traps by which the devil gets a hold of people and through which he injects his poison into their lives. It prevents children of God from being what the Lord wants them to be. Without realizing it, they start following the plan of the devil rather than the plan of God. Following those things only leads to confusion instead of clarity of direction. This is the origin of mental problems in the lives of many people.

Let us also remember to reject every operation of familiar spirits, which we saw earlier in this book. Those things can also be entrapping. Many people have been ensnared because someone with a spirit of divination revealed something to them. They end up having their lives ruled by a funny prophet in a white robe (I realize anyway that most of them have discarded the white garments and now wear normal clothing). What began their problems was that they listened to the voice of that spirit; they were impressed by the 'revelation' of a demonic spirit. Many of such people went to inquire concerning a lost thing. Some went to seek information concerning

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what God did not choose to reveal. Some went to the 'prophet' with the pictures of men who proposed marriage to them, and they were entrapped because the spirit told them things that could only be supernaturally known.

We are to refuse to hear any word spoken from the mouths of these possessed prophets, no matter how accurate it is. Jesus did not allow demons speak in his presence; He used to shut them up as soon as possible. Paul refused the testimony of that slave girl with the spirit of divination, even though her testimony seemed to be in his favour. Those things have enchanting effects that confuse the spirits of Christians, and we must avoid them. When you see people flocking to where someone is 'seeing visions' and revealing secrets, turn in the other direction; a spirit is ensnaring them. I have seen people enslaved by these spirits. It is a horrible life.

### **Another Form of Divination**

I also want to bring out the matter of divination from another angle. We have correctly tied divination with using occultic practises to peep into the future, but the desire to see into the future itself, no matter the method employed for this, is also a sin that Christians



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must avoid. Using 'godly' methods does not remove the displeasure of God from fortune-telling. There is a difference between the knowledge of the will of God and knowing the future.

When we are praying, we are not supposed to be trying to know the future but to aim to know what the Lord wants us to do *now*. I have seen Christians practising how to hear God concerning the future; they lock their spirits on a question about the future and start praying to see what the Spirit will reveal to them about it. They keep practising until they can see these things more clearly; they think it is spirituality, but it is not at all.

Being aware of what the future will be does not at all mean you know the will of God. The knowledge you gain may make you lean on your own understanding. Check the whole Bible and you will not find where we are told to do this. We are taught to trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and if the Lord chooses anytime to reveal the future, it is His prerogative. He usually does this so we can prepare for it or so we can avert what is wrong through repentance and prayer when possible. Our duty is to tackle the future through our faith in Him and not through peeping into it. We are

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to know that our lives are in His hands and that He is watching over us. We must bear in mind that His plan is being worked out through every event of our lives as we live in a manner pleasing to Him.

Attempting to know the future is nothing but unbelief. There is no special advantage in knowing things ahead. Trying to know the outcome of things before they happen is most times nothing but lack of trust in God. God doesn't always reveal the details of things yet to happen simply because such revelation is most often unnecessary, and also because too much knowledge will complicate our decisions and actions. There is a limit to the information we can handle without becoming confused as a result. Confusion will lead to disobedience. He has given enough information in the Word for us to fit everything around us into. We are to hope in the outcomes promised in the Word. The information in the Word may not be detailed but it is enough to tell us how to do. For example, He told us that we will have persecution, and how to react when it comes.

*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. Jn 16:33*

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We are to be brave in the face of tribulation because we know that our Jesus has the victory. He even told Christians being taken to trial not to even ask Him what they will say at the trial. He just wants them to know that He is the Victor.

*Make up your minds ahead of time not to worry about how you will defend yourselves, because I will give you such words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to refute or contradict what you say. Luk 21:14-16 GNT*

This is the power of faith we are talking about. Poking around into the future, even with what seems like godly means, is nothing but anxiety disguised, and there is no advantage to the knowledge anyway. Imagine that Joseph had known through divination that Mrs Potiphar was going to be a threat to him in that house; he would have kept away from her and so would have avoided going to prison. But the prison was the divinely ordained path to the full ministry and greatness the Lord planned for him.

And what if he had known everything including the outcome of being in prison? Then he couldn't have pleased God because without faith it is not possible to please Him. We are not to be interested at all in

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knowing the details of our lives is such a manner; that is to be handled by faith.

*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Rom 8:28*

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# Chapter 22



## **Final Words**

I wish to summarise everything we have seen in this book using two verses of Scripture:

*Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty. Eccl 12:13-14 NLT*

*Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. Jn 7:17 NLT*

If we truly fear God, and we are obeying His known commandments; if we really want to do His will and whatever might be pleasing to Him, then He WILL reveal His will to us, even if He has to personally appear to do so, and He will make us do it, even if He has to possess us to carry it out. It is pure faith in Him and genuine willingness to obey that will make His will come to pass in our lives, not the methods we learn for hearing voices from the spiritual realm.

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## ABOUT

# Kingdom-Word Ministries

The author ministers from the platform of Kingdom-Word Ministries, a non-denominational organization based in Enugu, Nigeria. Activities of the ministry include weekly Bible classes at the ministry office, publication of free teaching tracts and books, radio/TV broadcasts and organizing teaching seminars in various towns and cities.

The audio message digital catalogue includes hundreds of messages which are available on MP3 CDs and DVDs.

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**Dr. Bankole Olusina**, fondly called **Pastor Bankie**, is a teacher of the Word of God. He teaches from the platform of Kingdom-Word Ministries, a non-denominational teaching ministry based in Enugu, Nigeria. The emphasis of his teachings is the separation of the church from the world by obedience to the truths of God. He is a member of the Light of Christ Community Alumni Fellowship (LOCCAF) Ministers' Forum and is happily married to the wife of his youth and partner in ministry, Ufuoma.

### Bezalel Enlite

Sometimes we wonder how people get to a point of saying 'God told me' concerning a matter. Many of us have tried to quieten our spirits so that we might hear the voice of the Spirit too but we hardly heard anything reliable. This whole hearing God matter has generated so much confusion when in reality it shouldn't. God is good and could not have designed things to be so.

Following the leading of the Holy Spirit is not hard at all. It is not something that is reserved only for the *gurus* of Christianity. Every child of God can follow the leading of the Spirit and know His will in every matter. It is not hard at all, and how to do it is what this book is about.

In reading this book you will learn among other things,

- *What the will of God really is,*
- *What it means to have the Spirit of Christ,*
- *How to walk in the will of God all the time,*
- *Why Balaam heard the voice of God and still missed His will and why most God-told-me one hears are not actually the will of God,*
- *The role of prophets in your life, and*
- *How to avoid false prophets.*

This is a book that holds a lot of knowledge that will bring deliverance for the Child of God.

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