

AN INWARD WITNESS

- A. Introduction: If Jesus is your Savior and Lord, then God, by His Spirit, has indwelt you. In this series we're working on becoming God-inside minded. I John 4:4; Eph 1:19,20
1. God created human beings for relationship with Himself. His plan was that we'd become His sons and daughters through faith in Christ. Eph 1:4,5
 - a. The Lord made humans in such a way that He can indwell us by His Spirit and express Himself through us. His plan was that He would not only be with men, He would indwell us by His Spirit.
 - b. Man's sin and rebellion took the plan off track. A holy God cannot inhabit an unholy dwelling place. God cannot indwell sinners.
 - c. However, the Lord devised a plan to rectify the situation and carry out His original intention. That plan is called redemption.
 1. God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to earth, took on human nature, and went to the Cross to pay for the sins of men. All who believe on Jesus and His sacrifice are justified or made as if they never sinned. Rom 8:29
 - A. To be justified means to be declared not guilty or acquitted. When you're forgiven, you did it, but the person you wronged chooses not to pay you back. When you're pardoned, you did it, but you are released from the just penalty under the Law. When you're acquitted, all charges are dropped because there is no evidence of wrong doing.
 - B. Col 2:14--He has utterly wiped out the written evidence of broken commandments which always hung over our heads, and has completely annulled it by nailing it to the cross. (Phillips)
 2. Justification is a means to an end. Once we are washed clean by the Blood of the Lamb and no longer guilty of sin, God can indwell us by His Spirit.
 - d. If you have acknowledged Jesus as your Savior and made Him Lord of your life, God has come into you or indwelt you by His Spirit. You are now a temple or dwelling place of Almighty God. I Cor 3:16; I Cor 6:16; etc.
 1. You now have a Being in you (the Holy Spirit) who wants to work in you and transform you, restoring you to what He intended, conformity to the image of Christ. Rom 8:29; I John 2:6
 2. To be conformed to the image of Christ means to be made like Jesus. Jesus, in His humanity, is the pattern for God's family. He shows us what sons and daughters of God are like.
 3. They do the will of God their Father (John 4:34). They always please the Father (John 8:29). They show the Father to the world around them through their words and works (John 14:9,10)
 2. In the last two lessons we've been focusing on the fact that the Holy Spirit is in us to lead and guide us. We've made these points:
 - a. When we're talking about being led by the Spirit, we're talking about knowing and following the will of God for our life. God's will is expressed through His written Word, the Bible.
 - b. God has a general and a specific will. The general will includes the information in the Bible. The specific will includes issues not directly addressed in Scripture.
 1. People tend to focus more on the specific will of God. But that is putting the cart before the horse, because if you focus on His general will (revealed in the Bible), His specific will is easier to discern.
 2. The Holy Spirit inspired the humans who penned the Bible. When you are familiar with His voice in the Scriptures it is easier to hear His voice in the specifics of life.
 - c. People tend to focus on trying to be in the will of God. However, the Bible speaks of doing the will of God as opposed to being in the will of God. If you do His will you are in His will. Matt 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; John 6:38; 7:17; Eph 6:6; Heb 13:21; I John 2:17; etc.
 1. The general will of God revealed in the written Word of God can be summed up in two commands: Love God with your whole being and your neighbor as yourself. Matt 22:36-40

2. As we cooperate with His general will (written Word) that puts us in a position to learn His specific will. If we do our part, He does His part. Prov 3:6
 3. Our part is to walk in agreement with His general will and obey it. His part is to get us to the right place or to His specific will.
 3. In this lesson we want to talk about how the Holy Spirit gives us specific guidance and direction.
- B. Prov 20:27--God communicates with us in and through our spirit where He dwells by His Spirit. Therefore it is important that we know something about the human makeup so we know where to look for specific guidance.
1. I Thess 5:23--Man is a three part being: spirit, soul, and body. Sometimes people say: You are a spirit who lives in a body and you possess a soul. That's too simplistic and can be misleading. For the purpose of clarification we have to talk about each part separately, but they are all interrelated.
 - a. We could say it this way. II Cor 4:16--All human beings have an inward and an outward portion to their makeup. The outward portion is your physical body. Your inward portion is made up of spirit and soul. We could do an entire lesson on this topic, but consider these points.
 - b. Your soul is your mental and emotional faculties. Your spirit is the portion capable of direct communication with God. If you are born again, your spirit has been indwelt by God.
 - c. Yet the Bible calls your body the temple of God (I Cor 6:19). Why is that? Because your spirit fills your body (James 2:26).
 2. Let's back up a minute. We have misconceptions about the human makeup due to misinformation about the soul. People often say that at death our soul goes to Heaven. But that is not correct.
 - a. At death, the inward portion (spirit and soul) and the outward portion (body) separate. The body returns to dust and the inward portion (spirit and soul) passes into another dimension (either Heaven or Hell, depending on your response to Jesus in your lifetime).
 - b. Luke 16:19-31--Jesus told a story about two men who died at about the same time. His account gives us a lot of information about man's makeup.
 1. When these men died (separated from their bodies) they're not little floating dots called souls. They were fully intact. They were disembodied or separated from their bodies.
 2. They still looked like themselves. They recognize each other and those who had gone before them. They had feelings, reasoning abilities, and memories of those left behind.
 - c. There's much in this account we aren't going to discuss now because we don't have the space in this lesson and it doesn't relate to our topic. But note two points.
 1. In first century Palestine (Israel), Abraham's bosom was a common name for the home of the righteous dead.
 2. Jesus told this story to try to expose the covetousness of the Pharisees (religious leaders of His day) in the hope that they would surrender to God and not end up in (Hell) like the rich man. His purpose was not to give a detailed description of life after death.
 3. Back to our topic. The Holy Spirit communicates with our spirit. Our spirit and our soul are distinct from each other. We must be able to differentiate between them or we'll have trouble getting specific direction from God.
 - a. Remember, your soul is your mind and emotional faculties. Ps 42:5,6; Ps 116:7--Note that David was talking to something in him. He was telling his emotions to calm down and his mind to focus on God.
 1. The apostle Paul differentiated between spirit and soul. I Cor 14:14--He said that when we pray in other tongues, our spirit prays (the words come from the Holy Spirit in our spirit) but that our mind is unfruitful. We don't understand what we are praying.
 2. Heb 4:12--The soul and spirit can be differentiated. The Word of God (the Bible) helps us tell which is which. And it also exposes to us our inner motives. (This is another reason why becoming a regular, systematic reader of the New Testament is so important.)

- b. God communicates with us by His Spirit in our spirit. However, the information given to our spirit must pass through our soul (mind and emotions) to be expressed in our lives.
 - 1. At the new birth your spirit is made alive by the indwelling Spirit of life, the Holy Spirit. But your soul and body are not directly affected. Your mind must be renewed and your emotions and body brought under the control of your recreated spirit and the Word of God. (Lessons for another day).
 - 2. People mishear or don't hear God because they can't tell the difference between what is coming from their emotions or they misinterpret what He is saying because their minds aren't renewed.
 - A. A renewed mind is a mind that has learned from the Word of God to see things the way they really are according to Almighty God.
 - B. Rom 12:2--We're instructed to renew our mind "so that you may discern what God's will is—all that is good, acceptable, and perfect." (20th Cent)
- C. The Holy Spirit most often speaks to us, not through words which we hear, but through an inward witness or assurance, an inward knowing.
 - 1. In Rom 8:1-16 Paul wrote a lengthy passage about the necessity of learning to live in dependence on the power in you, the Holy Spirit. In doing so, Paul stresses the fact that we are born of God, literal sons of God through new birth.
 - a. We'll discuss the passage at another time. But for now, note that as part of Paul's discussion he made the statement that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God. v16
 - 1. Beareth witness is one word in the Greek. It means to testify jointly; corroborate by evidence. The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God (Amp)
 - 2. The Spirit Himself assures us (Knox); endorses our inward conviction (Phillips); In that cry the Spirit of God joins with our spirit in testifying (NEB).
 - b. Your spirit has been transformed through the new birth and is conformed to the image of Christ. Your spirit always wants to do the will of God. The Holy Spirit through our spirit is continually testifying the truth or the way things really are through an inward assurance. John 16:13
 - 1. Paul's point in the context of his statement is that the Holy Spirit in you testifies to and with your spirit that you are born of God. You have an inward knowing that you're born of God.
 - 2. But how many Christians struggle with: Am I even saved? They are unable to distinguish their soul from their spirit. They take the testimony of their emotions (they don't feel saved) above the testimony of the Holy Spirit in their spirit: You are a son of God.
 - 2. Paul was specifically dealing with the fact that the Holy Spirit assures us that we are sons of God. But he gives us insight into how the Holy Spirit communicate with us. The Holy Spirit speaks to us or leads us primarily by an inward witness or assurance as opposed to audible words.
 - a. The leading of the Holy Spirit is very gentle. We would call it a hunch. Each time you follow that leading, that inward hunch, it's easier to perceive the next time.
 - b. His leading usually does not seem supernatural in any way. We tend to look for the spectacular (like an audible voice or a vision) and miss the supernatural leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit more often says no or nothing rather than yes. Remember, if you are doing God's will you are in His will. So, He really only needs to alert you if you are about to take a wrong move.
 - 2. Remember also, in many decisions we gather all the facts we can, make the most reasonable decision we can, all the while maintaining the attitude: I'll change course immediately if you tell me to do so Lord.
 - c. Remember, in all of this, if you mishear or don't perceive the leading of the Holy Spirit in you and make a mistake, it's not bigger than God.

3. Many Christians know little or nothing about following the leading of the Holy Spirit in their spirit. Why? Consider these points.
 - a. Many are too busy looking for outward, physical signs to try to figure out what God wants them to do. As we discussed in previous lessons, We don't look outside for direction. God does not direct us or speak to us through circumstances. We walk by faith, not sight. II Cor 5:7
 - b. Many Christians do not know that we are not to be guided by our emotions (topic for another day). Emotions don't have all the facts in any situation. Emotions can and often do give us incorrect information. Emotions can drive us to act in ungodly ways. Eph 4:26
 1. Many cannot tell the difference between their spirit and their soul (their mind and emotions). The Word of God helps us tell the difference between spirit and soul. Heb 4:12
 2. We've said this before, but it bears repeating. If you don't spend time reading God's Word it is hard to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in your spirit because you are not familiar with His voice or the kinds of things He says. The same Spirit who leads and guides you is the same Spirit who gave us the words in the Bible. And He leads us in line with the Word of God.
 3. Just because you "feel" something is right or wrong, doesn't make it right or wrong. The issue is: What does God's Word say? If there is no specific statement about it in the Bible, what are you sensing in your spirit?
 - c. Many Christians are way too free with the phrase: "The Lord told Me". Christians tend to attribute every thought, idea, and gas bubble to the Lord.
 1. I don't believe that people do it out of wrong motives. They hear other people saying it, so they begin to say it, too. The problem is this: If God is saying to everyone all the things that are attributed to Him, He's crazy, He contradicts Himself, and He says things are going to happen that never happen.
 2. In most cases, we get an idea about something we want to do and we say "the Lord told me". Let's try to be more precise in how we state things. If He told you, He told you. But if it's an idea that came into your mind and you believe He is the source behind it, let's be more accurate in how we retell it.
- D. Conclusion: We have more to say, but consider these thoughts as we close. The Holy Spirit is in you to lead you and guide you. But it's not automatic. You must do your part. Your part is to become familiar with His voice through the written Word of God.
1. As we spend time with God in His word, we will learn what His will is. As we obey His word, we become doers of His will. Because we do His will, we are in His will. As we practice His general will for our lives, He will make His specific will clear to us.
 2. Try to become more aware of that still, small voice—that hunch—in your spirit. This inward witness is the number one way the Holy Spirit leads and guides us. More next week!