

## GUIDED INTO TRUTH

- A. Introduction: If Jesus is your Lord and Savior, you have been indwelt by God. The Bible refers to you as the temple or dwelling place of God (I Cor 3:16; 6:19). Paul prayed that Christians would know the greatness of the power in us, the same power that raised Christ from the dead, the Holy Spirit. Eph 1:19,20.
1. We're working on becoming God-inside minded. As part of our discussion we're considering the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. For several weeks we've been focusing on the fact that He is in us to lead and guide us and want to add to the discussion in this lesson. John 16:13
    - a. When we start talking about guidance and direction from God (the Holy Spirit) people begin to think in terms of Him telling us what job to take, where to live, who to marry, and what car to buy. But that's not the starting point for a study of receiving guidance from God.
    - b. In fact, if that's all you know and are concerned with in getting direction from God, you more than likely won't get what you're looking for.
      1. Much of our desire to know what God wants us to do is self-focused. We're afraid He'll punish us if we make a wrong turn or we'll be hurt in some way if we go the wrong direction. Our desire to be led by God is for our good rather than His glory.
      2. His glory and our good are not necessarily mutually exclusive. But you must have it in the right order. If you desire His glory above all else, it will result in good for you, and He will direct your path. Matt 6:10,11;33; Prov 3:6
  2. The night before Jesus went to the Cross, as He prepared His disciples for the fact that He would soon return to Heaven, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and indwell them. John 14:16
    - a. Three different times that night, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth and told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13
      1. Jesus said He will glorify Me by receiving input from Me and showing it to you. He will testify of Me. John 15:26--He will speak plainly about me. (Phillips)
      2. The Spirit of Truth works with the Word of Truth to reveal the Truth. He leads us in line with the written Word, the Bible, which reveals the Living Word, Jesus. John 17:17; John 14:6
    - b. The first thing we see the Holy Spirit do in the lives of the disciples is give them understanding of the Living Word (Jesus) and the written Word of God (the Scriptures).
      1. Matt 16:17--When Jesus asked His disciples: "Who do you say that I am" and Peter replied: You are the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus said to him: Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven. That revelation came through the Holy Spirit because no man can say "Jesus is Lord" but by the Holy Spirit. I Cor 12:3
      2. John 14:26--At the Last Supper, Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance what He had told them over the past three years. For example:
        - A. John 12:14-16--On what we call Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey in fulfillment of a prophecy concerning Him (Zech 9:9). After His resurrection they remembered and understood the significance of what had happened.
        - B. John 2:19-22--Jesus predicted His resurrection, promising to raise up His body in three days. After His resurrection the disciples remembered and understood what He said.
        - C. Luke 24:43,44--On resurrection day Jesus took His disciples through the prophecies concerning Himself and opening their understanding. The Holy Spirit reveals what He hears from Jesus.
    - c. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the Bible and to see Jesus more clearly. That's what He's come to do. Remember where we started this whole series last year with Paul's prayer for believers "(That God) may grant you the Spirit to give wisdom and revelation which come through a growing knowledge of Him, by having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, so that you may know what the hope is to which He calls you, how gloriously rich God's portion in His people is, and how surpassingly great is His power for us who believe (Eph 1:17-19, Williams).

- B. In terms of guidance and direction for our lives, the Holy Spirit first and foremost wants to lead us into holy living. The Holy Spirit is in us to guide our conduct as He empowers us to obey God the Father and live and walk as Jesus (in His humanity) did when He was on earth. I John 2:6; John 14:12; etc.
1. If you don't understand this and don't seek Him for this kind of guidance, you'll have a difficult time discerning His leading in the affairs of life such as which car to buy or what job to take.
    - a. The number one way the Holy Spirit guides us in areas where there are no specific Bible passages to direct us is through an inward witness or assurance in our Spirit. Prov 20:27; Rom 8:16
    - b. The Holy Spirit is in us to communicate with us, not through audible words, but through bearing witness or testifying to and with our spirit. We could call it a hunch.
  2. Last week, we learned that Christians have trouble discerning the inward witness or leading of the Holy Spirit because they are carnal.
    - a. Paul wrote to believers in the Greek city of Corinth to address a number of issues. They were engaging in very un-Christ-like behaviors. There was strife and division and sexual immorality. They were gorging themselves and getting drunk at communion. They were abusing spiritual gifts.
    - b. I Cor 2:9-14; I Cor 3:1-3--In his epistle (letter) Paul made a distinction between spiritual men, or those can perceive the things of God, and those who cannot. He told the Corinthians that he wanted to deal with them as spiritual people, but couldn't because they were carnal.
      1. Carnal, in the Greek, means pertaining to the flesh. To be carnal means to live according to the dictates of your flesh. Your flesh refers to the parts of your makeup that were not directly affected by the new birth—your mind, emotions, and body.
      2. To be carnal means to live according to the dictates of these unchanged parts of your being. This can range from outright sin (such as giving into desires prohibited by God's Word) to basing what you believe on what you see and how you feel rather than on what the Bible says.
    - c. Christians who engage in willful, sinful activities are carnal and cannot perceive the leading of the Holy Spirit in their spirit. Christians who put more stock in what they see and feel also cannot perceive the inward leading of the Holy Spirit.
  3. Before we move on, I need to address to issues that may come up at this point based on what I just said. Possibly, you are thinking: If you have to be sin-free to discern the leading of the Spirit, then no one can follow the His inward leading because we all sin everyday. Or, you may be thinking: Does this mean we have to pretend we aren't scared or sad or mad? Do we have to deny our feelings in order to hear from the Holy Spirit?
    - a. The idea that it is normal for Christians to sin everyday is non-biblical. We can and should see progress in holy living because we have in us the same power that raised Christ from the dead to help us control our flesh. We could do an entire lesson on this, but consider several thoughts.
      1. People have this idea based on a statement Paul made in Rom 7:15--The things I don't want to do, I do. Paul was referring to himself before he was indwelt by God.
        - A. He goes on to say that Christ has delivered him from this condition so that he could keep the righteousness of God's Law by the power of the Holy Spirit in him. Rom 7:24-8:14
    - B. Paul's point in Romans 6,7,8 is: Before I was born of God, before I became a temple of the Holy Spirit with His indwelling power, I had no power to control my flesh. Now I do.
      2. People believe we sin everyday because they feel guilty. If you have that vague feeling of guilt we all experience, but can't identify a specific action you took that violated God's Word, then you're experiencing false guilt. We don't live by feelings, we live by what God says.
        - A. I'm not saying Christians never sin. We all do from time to time. God's purpose is to reveal to you what needs to change, not keep you feeling continuously guilty.
        - B. Because the voice of your feelings trumps God's Word, you are carnal and don't discern the Holy Spirit in you, testifying to the truth that you are a conqueror through Christ, the righteousness of God in Christ, able to walk even as Jesus walked. Rom 8:37; II Cor 5:21

b. We don't deny our feelings. If you're scared, you're scared. Something in your situation has stimulated your emotions. That is normal and that's okay. We don't pretend. We recognize that our feelings don't have all the facts and they often give us incorrect information.

1. Mark 5:21-35--A man named Jairus asked Jesus to come and heal his daughter who was close to death. Jesus went with him, but was interrupted when a woman with an issue of blood touched Jesus and was instantly healed. While Jesus dealt with the woman, a report came from Jairus' house that his daughter had died.

A. Mark 5:36--(Overhearing) but ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be seized with alarm and have no fear, only keep on believing. (Amp)

B. Jesus wasn't pretending nor asking Jairus to pretend. Jesus knew that the girl's death didn't change the fact that He power over sickness and death and had been authorized by His Father in Heaven to set captives free. So He didn't let the news dominate Him.

C. He exhorted Jairus: Don't let the fear you're feeling take over and determine your actions. Simply continue to believe what I told you. I will come and heal your daughter.

2. Ps 56:3,4--When David was being chased by men intent on killing him (a situation that stimulated fear), his stance was: What time I am afraid, I will trust in you. He chose to focus on God's Word, God's promise to him to get him through.

4. Rom 8:5,6--In the context of being able to do the will of God by the power of the Holy Spirit in us, Paul wrote that those who are spiritual live according to the dictates of their spirit which is indwelled by the Holy Spirit and that they mind the things of the spirit and not the flesh.

a. We could do an entire series on this point, but consider several thoughts. Your recreated spirit, which has been indwelled by the Holy Spirit, always wants to do the will of God, live according to the Word of God, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

b. The determining factor in you success or failure as a Christian is your mind (your view of reality) and where you focus your attention. All of us came into the kingdom of God with misperceptions about reality. Our minds are darkened because we were cut off from the life in God. Eph 4:18

1. Rom 12:1,2--Christians are instructed to give their bodies to God and renew their minds. A renewed mind is a mind that sees things as they really are, according to God. Our mind is renewed through reading and feeding on the Word of God, the Bible.

2. Those who mind the flesh get their information about reality from the unchanged parts of their being (their mind, emotions, and body). Those who mind the spirit get their information about reality from the Word of God, the Bible. It is truth. John 17:17

c. If you don't learn to control your mind (your thoughts) and make a determined effort to keep your focus on the way things really are according to God, you will not discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, nor will you walk in victory as a Christian. The Holy Spirit will not control your mind or focus your attention for you. You must do it. You must set your mind on things above.

1. Col 3:2--Set and affection are the same Greek word. It means to exercise the mind, to entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; to be mentally disposed in a certain direction. v2--

And set your minds and keep them set on what is above—the higher things—not on things that are on the earth (Amp); practice occupying your minds with (Williams); let your thoughts dwell on that higher realm (NEB).

2. You must become aware of what you're I thinking. Ask yourself: Is it making me afraid that I'll be destroyed or confident that I'll survive? Is it what I feel or is it fact according to the Word of God. Can I actually do anything about it? Is it building me up or beating me down?

5. If you are not actively engaged in controlling your mind (which affects your emotions) and focusing your attention on reality as it truly is, you won't be able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit.

C. Conclusion: We have more to say next week, but consider these thoughts as we close. There's a lot of foolishness in the Body of Christ today in the area of being guided by the Spirit.

1. The way a lot of people describe their interaction with God it sounds like He sits on the bed with them in the morning and tells them which pair of socks to put on.
  - a. People attribute every thought they have to: the Lord told me. All kinds of people talk about God giving them dreams and visions. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: If God is talking to people the way many people describe it, then God is crazy.
    1. I can't count the number of times someone has said to me: the Lord told me to do such and such. They do it and it turns out to be a disaster, and they want to know why. That's easy.
  - b. The Lord never told you to do it. You can't tell the difference between your spirit and your soul, and you attribute your thoughts and emotions (the output of your soul) to God. Heb 4:12
    1. If you tell me that the Lord talks to you and you're living a carnal life, I don't believe you. I'm not saying you're lying. I'm saying you are mistaken. You think you hear from God, but you don't.
      1. God is much more concerned about Christ-like behavior and attitudes than He is which socks you wear. His message to you is: Live and walk as Jesus walked. I John 2:6
      2. I've been a stable, committed Christian for over forty years and I've heard the Holy Spirit speak to me in my spirit four times.
        - A. I realize that my experience is not the standard for Christian behavior. But I say this to encourage those of you who wonder if there's something wrong with you because God doesn't talk to you like other people says He talks to them.
        - B. On the other hand, I can give you numerous examples of times I followed the inward witness (that inward hunch) and amazing things happened.
2. When we read the Book of Acts and look at how the Holy Spirit interacted with the first Christians, we see that He led them by the inward witness, by speaking to them, and by more spectacular interaction such as dreams and visions (I wanted get into this in more detail, but it'll have to wait until next week). Note the following facts about these first Christians.
  - a. Remember where we started this lesson: The first thing we see the Holy Spirit do in the lives of the disciples is give them understanding of the Living Word (Jesus) and the written Word of God (the Scriptures). The pattern was set for them: We set our mind on things above.
  - b. They desired God's glory above their own good. When they were jailed and beaten for preaching the resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem and were ordered not to do it any more, their response was: We serve God, not man. It's right for us to do what He's told us to do. Acts 4:18-20; Acts 5:29
  - c. These people left all to follow Him (Matt 19:27). When Jesus' teachings became harder for some to accept and many quit following Him, He asked His disciples if they would leave too. Peter's response was: Where else would we go (John 6:68)? Paul longed to be conformed to the image of Christ (Phil 3:13,14).
3. The first step in being led by the Spirit is hungering to know God through His Word. As you get familiar with Him, you'll learn to recognize His leading. The Holy Spirit is here to reveal Jesus to us and through us as He guides us into all truth. More next week.