

Lesson

4

The Holy Spirit Leads You

The Bible says, “The Spirit has given us life; he must also control our lives” (Galatians 5:25). That is, we must not only *receive* the Holy Spirit, but we must also *walk* in the Spirit. The apostle Paul had heard of some Christians who were not walking in the Spirit. To them he made this sad announcement: “You still live as the people of this world live” (1 Corinthians 3:3).

In his book *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Willard Cantelon points out the importance of walking in the Spirit. “No matter how much a man may receive from God in spiritual gifts, nothing is accomplished unless that man walks in the Spirit” (p. 29). The Holy Spirit comes to show us the truth. But how can He teach us if we ignore the Bible, the Word of Truth? He has come to give us power to witness and power to pray. But how can He perform His great work through us and in us if we keep silent about our faith and neglect prayer?

“Walking in the Spirit” means letting the Holy Spirit lead you. But just exactly *how* does He lead? This lesson answers that important question.



In this lesson you will study . . .

You Have a Friend to Lead You
He Leads You by God’s Word
He Leads You by the Church
He Leads You by Spiritual Gifts
He Leads You by Visions and Dreams
He Leads You by Circumstances and Impressions

This lesson will help you . . .

- Explain why the Holy Spirit is qualified to lead you.
- Describe five ways the Holy Spirit helps you “walk in the Spirit.”
- Know how to identify which messages and gifts come from God.

YOU HAVE A FRIEND TO LEAD YOU

Objective 1. Give reasons why the Holy Spirit is qualified to lead you.

How many times have you asked your friends, “What do you think I should do?” Some people even depend on horoscopes and fortunetellers. But you have Someone much better than that. You have a Friend who knows the future. He knows what is best for you. He loves you and wants to guide you in all your decisions. He is the Holy Spirit, your helpful Friend.

Galatians 5:16, 25. Let the Spirit direct your lives. The Spirit has given us life; He must also control our lives.



For You To Do

1 The Holy Spirit is qualified to lead you because He knows theand He you.

HE LEADS YOU BY GOD’S WORD

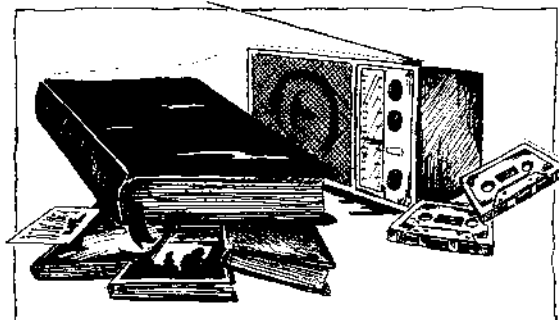
Objective 2. Identify ways in which you need to let the Holy Spirit use the Bible to lead you.

The Bible is the *road map* that the Holy Spirit uses to lead you to heaven. Day by day He helps you apply to your circumstances the teachings of God’s Word. So it is very important for you to read your Bible every day.

The Holy Spirit will sometimes speak to you through certain verses as you read. Time after time Christians have said, “I had a problem and didn’t know what to do. Then as I was reading the Bible one verse seemed to stand out from the page. It was exactly what I needed. My problem was solved.”

The Bible verses that you memorize make it easier for the Holy Spirit to lead you. He will bring them to your mind when you need them. When you are tempted to do something you shouldn’t do, a verse may come to your mind as a warning. “You are the God who sees me.” the Bible says (Genesis 16:13, NIV). The Holy Spirit has brought these words to many a Christian just in time to turn him or her away from temptation.

Psalm 119:9. How can a young man keep his life pure? By obeying your commands.



The Holy Spirit will also speak to you through Bible teaching. This may be in preaching or teaching in the church, on the radio, in Bible clubs, in gospel literature, and in study courses such as this one. These are ways that He has chosen to lead you into all truth. Remember John 16:13.



For You To Do

- 2 Repeat from memory John 16:13.
- 3 Memorize Psalm 118:9.
- 4 Following are listed ways the Holy Spirit can use the Bible to lead you. Draw a line under those that you need to do more often.
Read the Bible.
Memorize Bible verses.
Listen to sermons.
Attend Bible classes.
Read books that explain truths in the Bible.
Study Bible courses.

HE LEADS YOU BY THE CHURCH

Objective 3. *Appreciate the people God sends to teach you.*

How do children learn to walk, talk, run, play, and work? From their families! Father, mother, brothers, and sisters all teach the child what to do and how to do it.

When you were born again, the Holy Spirit made you a part of God's family—the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He expects you to accept from your brothers and sisters in Christ the help that they can give you. You will find much guidance, teaching, and help as you take your place in a local church. Be sure that it is one that believes the Bible, obeys it, and teaches and accepts the work of the Holy Spirit.

Christ has put in the church pastors, teachers, and other leaders. The Holy Spirit provides for them special gifts and power so they can do their work well.

Ephesians 4:12. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ.

Every member of the church needs to be full of the Holy Spirit. As leaders and members are led by the Spirit, the whole church can work together in harmony. Each one will do his or her part effectively in God's plan.



For You To Do

- 5 Pray for your pastor and other leaders that they may be continually full of the Holy Spirit.

HE LEADS YOU BY SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Objective 4. *Identify five standards that spiritual gifts will meet.*

The Holy Spirit has spiritual gifts for every Christian. He wants us to accept these gifts so we can help one another.

1 Corinthians 12:4,7. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

You have read about the gifts of faith, miracles, and healing. Here are some other supernatural gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:8,10. The Spirit gives one person a message of wisdom, while to another person the same Spirit gives a message full of knowledge.... to another, the gift of speaking God's message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and gifts that do not. To one person he gives the ability to speak in strange tongues, and to another he gives the ability to explain what is said.

The Holy Spirit may give your pastor or another Spirit-filled Christian the message of wisdom or of knowledge that you need. Or this message may come directly to you in a deep impression or flash of insight. You suddenly understand what God's will is for a certain situation. From outside of your own mind comes the revelation of what a Bible passage means and how it applies to your problem. God gives you the very words that you need to help someone else.

When you talk to people about the Lord or teach a Bible lesson you need this leading of the Holy Spirit. Parents need the word of wisdom from God to give their children the right kind of advice. The work of the Spirit is for practical everyday living, not just for crises.

Ephesians 1:17. The Spirit, who will make you wise.

Exodus 35:31 (NIV). And he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge, in all kinds of crafts.

Prophecy, messages in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues are ways the Holy Spirit speaks to a group. Prophecy is God's message in the language of the speaker. It may be telling something that will take place in the future. Or it may be just a message of exhortation and comfort to help the hearers. Sometimes the message comes first in tongues and then is interpreted. These two gifts together are like the gift of prophecy.

Some people are afraid of these gifts of the Spirit because of false messages that they have heard about. This is like refusing to accept money because you might get a counterfeit bill. Satan has always tried to confuse people by imitations of God's work. There were false prophets in Bible times and still are today. But your Friend the Holy Spirit does not want you to refuse His gifts for fear of receiving a counterfeit or imitation of His work.

Neither does God want you to be deceived by imitations of His work. That is why one of the gifts of the Spirit is discernment of spirits; it protects the church from the work of evil spirits and mistaken ideas of people. People sometimes mistake their own ideas for revelations from God. Some bring terrible confusion by giving "messages" to tell others whom to marry, where to go, and what to do. So God tells us to test all messages.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22. Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; do not despise inspired messages. Put all things to the test: keep what is good and avoid every kind of evil.

Messages from the Holy Spirit meet these five standards:

1. The message must agree completely with God's Word. For example, a message that tells a man to take someone else's wife could not possibly be from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to help us obey God, not to tell us to do something God has forbidden. Agreement with God's Word is the most important test; everything has to be measured by it.

2. *The message must be true.* If what is said in a message is not true, it is not from the Holy Spirit for He is the Spirit of truth. Prophecies that are from the Lord are fulfilled.

Jeremiah 28:9. But a prophet . . . can only be recognized as a prophet whom the Lord has truly sent when that prophet's predictions come true.

Deuteronomy 18:21,22. You may wonder how you can tell when a prophet's message does not come from the Lord. If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and what he says does not come true, then it is not the Lord's message. That prophet has spoken on his own authority, and you are not to fear him.

John 16:13 (NIV). But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

3. *The message will honor Christ.* The Spirit of God honors both the Father and the Son.

John 16:14. He will give me glory.

1 Corinthians 12:3. No one who is led by God's Spirit can say, "A curse on Jesus!"

4. *The message will bring blessing, not confusion.*

1 Corinthians 14:3,4, 26. But the one who proclaims God's message speaks to people and gives them help, encouragement, and comfort The one who proclaims God's message helps the whole church Everything must be of help to the church.

5. *The one who gives the message is conscious and responsible to do everything in an orderly way.* Sometimes Satan imitates the work of the Holy Spirit. In spiritism the mediums may go into a trance and not be conscious of what they say when another spirit takes control of them. But when the Holy Spirit gives a message through a person, He does it with the conscious cooperation of that person. The person can choose when to speak and when to keep quiet so that he won't interrupt the message God has given the pastor or others. Paul clearly teaches this in 1 Corinthians 14. The pastor should encourage the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but at the same time he or she is responsible to see that all is done in order and not confusion. So those who have the gifts of the Spirit must recognize the leadership of the pastor and not resent his or her instructions or advice.

1 Corinthians 14:32-33,40. The gift of proclaiming God's message should be under the speaker's control, because God does not want us to be in disorder but in harmony and peace. Everything must be done in a proper and orderly way.



For You To Do

- 6 Memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22.
- 7 You have studied five standards to use for judging any message that is supposed to be from God. Circle the letter in front of each word or phrase that gives one of those standards. (There will be a total of five.)
 - a) Long with many details
 - b) Honoring to Jesus Christ
 - c) Forceful, loud, and authoritative
 - d) Under the speaker's control
 - e) Brings a blessing to the hearers
 - f) Accompanied by tears
 - g) Agrees with God's Word
 - h) Has a true message

HE LEADS YOU BY VISIONS AND DREAMS

Objective 5. *Recognize the way God can lead you through visions and dreams.*

You have read in the Bible about how God spoke to people in visions and dreams. The Holy Spirit still speaks to people in this way today. What Joel prophesied is happening.

Acts 2:17. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams.

In 1940, B.T. Bard wrote about a wonderful outpouring of the Spirit in Peking:

There are confessions of sins and shortcomings, messages in tongues and interpretation, prophetic utterances, spiritual dreams, heavenly visions of Christ and the glory land, divine healings, and, above all, a spirit of prayer and worship.

Kao Chu Ju truly desired the presence of God but she was afraid to have any show made of herself, or for anyone to lay hands on her. Suddenly she saw Jesus in a vision, and He graciously laid His own nail-pierced hands on her. She fell to the floor under the power of the Spirit and soon was speaking rapturously in other tongues as the Spirit gave her utterance.

Dreams that come from God are very vivid and impress the person deeply. Many people have been warned in dreams to give up sin and accept Jesus as their Savior. You may receive blessing, help, and encouragement in your dreams. Or the Holy Spirit may lead you to pray for someone or warn you of a danger.

Most dreams are not revelations from God. Your subconscious mind keeps on working while you sleep and weaves your thoughts into dreams. However, you can make even these dreams work for you. Use them as a reminder to pray for everyone that you see in your dreams.



For You To Do

8 If you have a dream that seems to have a spiritual meaning, ask God to show you what the meaning is.

HE LEADS YOU BY CIRCUMSTANCES AND IMPRESSIONS

A Christian missed the bus she had planned to take. Four hours later she caught the next bus, sat down by a woman who needed God, and was able to lead her to Christ. The Holy Spirit had led through circumstances.

Do the doors of opportunity seem closed before you? Look around. The Holy Spirit may be opening a door to better opportunities. Think of the early Christians who fled from Jerusalem to save their lives. But wherever they went they spread the gospel and souls were saved. Paul in prison was unable to continue his missionary journeys, but while there he wrote some of his most helpful epistles.

Are conditions around you terrible? Maybe God has put you there so you can do something about them. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see what you can do. Then keep your eyes open and go to work to improve conditions. You are one of God's lamps. Don't complain about the darkness. Just shine where you are.

The Holy Spirit will often lead you by impressions, as you trust Him to help you in the choices you must make. When you think about doing one thing, you feel a deep peace about it. But when you think about the other possibility, you feel uneasy.

A Christian businessman had a reservation on a certain plane, but he felt uneasy about it. The more he thought about it the worse he felt. Finally he changed his reservations for a later flight. The plane he had planned to take crashed and all the passengers were killed. The Holy Spirit saved his life.

Proverbs 16:9. You may make your plans, but God directs your actions.

A pastor, hurrying to an appointment, felt an impression. “Stop and knock on the door of that house.” He tried to ignore the idea but it grew stronger. Finally he turned around and went up to the house. There he found a Christian in desperate need of his help.

A Christian felt an urgent impulse to go visit a friend. When he arrived, he found his friend getting ready to commit suicide. The Christian was able to lead him to Christ and save his life.

“The Lord told me to bring you this,” a man said as he gave a basket of food to a pastor. The pastor and his wife had been praying for God to supply their needs because they had no money and no food.

Life can become a series of thrilling adventures for you as you are filled with the Holy Spirit and learn to follow His leading. He will lead you into a life of great usefulness and blessing.



For You To Do

9 You have read five different examples of God’s leading through circumstances or impressions. Based on these examples, what could be said about this kind of leading?

- a) It usually concerns something to avoid.
- b) It is definite and the result brings honor to God.
- c) It can be easily ignored.
- d) It conforms to the plans one has already made.

10 Do you want the Holy Spirit to lead you? Mark an **X** before each step you will take each day so that He can help you “walk in the Spirit.”

... Read and study the Bible.

... Listen to godly leaders.

... Judge spiritual gifts and accept those that are genuine.

... Hear God’s voice if He uses visions or dreams.

... Obey God’s warning or direction if He guides through circumstances or impressions



Check Your Answers

10 We hope you marked all of them!

1 future, loves.

9 b) It is definite and the result brings honor to God.

7 b) Honoring to Jesus Christ.

d) Under the speaker's control.

e) Brings a blessing to the hearers.

g) In agreement with God's Word.

h) Has a true message.