

Finding the Spirit's Guidance

But it was to us that God made known his secret by means of his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God's purposes. ¹¹It is only the spirit within us that knows all about us; in the same way, only God's Spirit knows all about God. ¹²We have not received this world's spirit; instead, we have received the Spirit sent by God, so that we may know all that God has given us.

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 (Good News Translation)

The Bible gives **three fundamentals** all of us need to understand and act upon in order to walk in God's will and experience the Holy Spirit's guidance.

- **FUNDAMENTAL #1: YOU NEED TO COMMIT YOURSELF TO ALL LEVELS OF GOD'S WILL.**

From now on, then, you must live the rest of your earthly lives controlled by God's will and not by human desires. 1 Peter 4:2 (GNT)

Three Levels of the Will of God

- First level: God's moral will; contained within the revelation of Scripture

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for . . . giving instruction for right living, ¹⁷so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (GNT)

- Second level: God's individual will for each of His children

- Third level: God's Sovereign will

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, . . . Ephesians 1:11 (New International Version)

When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. Acts 16:7-8 (NIV)

- **Fundamental #2: YOU MUST KNOW AND PURSUE THE CHANNELS WHICH THE SPIRIT USES TO GUIDE YOU.**

The Ways in Which the Spirit Speaks

- Through the Bible

Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. ¹⁷Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (The Message)

- The two avenues of receiving God's Word are reading and hearing.

When you got the Message of God we preached, you didn't pass it off as just one more human opinion, but you took it to heart as God's true word to you, which it is, God himself at work in you believers!

1 Thessalonians 2:13b (The Message)

So then, we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, as we explain spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:13 (GNT)

- The Holy Spirit speaks by confirming Scripture and applying it to our lives.

"The Holy Spirit . . . will be your teacher and will bring to your minds all I have said to you." John 14:26 (Phillips Translation)

- Through the Spirit's Inner Witness

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. . . ." Revelation 2:7a, 11a, 17a (NIV)

- An inner witness is an inner conviction, a stirring of heart that moves you in a certain direction.

- An inner witness might happen in a number of ways.

- An impression: an inner confirmation in my spirit of the Spirit's voice

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us . . . Acts 15:28 (NIV)

- A Picture: when the Spirit places a picture in your mind's eye and then speaks to you about it (See Genesis 15.)

- Through Prayer

But if any of you lack wisdom, you should pray to God, who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all. James 1:5 (GNT)

- Through Circumstances

- Circumstances are to confirm the Spirit's inner witness, not determine it.
- God can also use painful circumstances to guide us.

Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways. Proverbs 20:30 (GNT)

- **Fundamental #3: YOU MUST MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIP TO EXPERIENCE THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE.**

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: . . .²While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."³Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. Acts 13:1-3 (New American Standard Bible)

- Ministering to the Lord = praying, worshiping, connecting with God
- The more intimate my relationship with Jesus, the clearer I can hear the voice of the Spirit.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. John 15:7 (English Standard Version)

My thanks to the authors of the following books used as resources in this sermon series:
Surprised by the Power of the Spirit by Jack Deere; *The Promise* by Tony Evans;
God's Empowering Presence by Gordon Fee; *The Holy Spirit* by Billy Graham;
Those Controversial Gifts by George Mallone