



How Are We

**Led by
The Spirit**

by **Ralph Nault**

LED BY THE SPIRIT

BY RALPH NAULT

Note: This text is extracted from the original book source and has not been fully formatted. Pictures are missing.

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LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:14--- "For all who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God...."

Revelations 3:20---"behold I stand at the door and Knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the Door, I will come unto him and dine with him, and he with me."

The Bible tells us that Jesus followed the Fathers leading by doing and saying only what The Father wanted him to do and say. Over and over the Scriptures tell us to see and hear what our Father is telling us and showing us.

The references to a personal leading are unmistakable, in the Old and New Testaments. Many have come to us in the past few years asking us the same Questions:

"What is Gods purpose for my life?"

"What direction shall I take?"

"What is my ministry?"

These and other questions were asked concerning their personal lives. At first I tried to give them answer: now I don't. Instead I try to show them that the leading of the Spirit is already in them, if they can find it and recognize it. I believe that the voice of God is in every one of us, if we can only learn to listen. I also believe that many of the Bible teaching can only be learned by experience. We need to learn, see, and experience the things of God

Seeing is an experience. Hearing is and experience. We find that Jesus brought the disciples through many experiences only to teach

them what He was telling them. He is also going to bring you and me through many experiences to teach us. Let us be good students.

Jesus used actual experiences and parables to teach the people in Biblical times. Those methods are still very good today. I want to share some of my own experiences of God's leading in my life—not only to illuminate how God led me, but in the hope that the Lord will cause you to see your way more clearly as well.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. With this in mind, do you believe that God wants you to see and hear? Do you believe that God wants you to know His purpose in your life?

Pray with me. "Father in Jesus name, give me faith to believe that you want me to see and hear and to know your purpose for my life." I urge you to pray this way until you receive God's message for regarding your life. God has something to say to you as an individual. Wait for His word. Pray for it. Listen for it.

Many already have the faith that God can and will speak to them, but they have another problem. Their problem is similar to the one that the followers of Moses had when God was going to speak to them. They were fearful and told Moses, "You talk with God, then come back and tell us what God wants us to do and we will do it, lest we die when God speaks." Their problem was fear. So for those that might be afraid, pray: Lord deliver me from this fear that keeps me from drawing near when you want to speak to me."

Another important issue that hinders us in our spiritual quest is the anxiety about making mistakes. It is feared that if God speaks, you may not test it properly and thereby be deceived. Put your mind at rest; you are going to make mistakes. Sometimes when God speaks to me I don't understand it either so I make a mistake. I go to the wrong place, I do the wrong thing, I speak the wrong word, so what!

We're all going to make mistakes learning to be led by the Spirit. Being led by the Spirit is new to most of us. What is important is

that we learn from our mistakes and hopefully not repeat them too often. If we are so afraid of a mistake that we don't even try, we go nowhere.

There are some things that we can do to limit the number of mistakes we make. First, let us pray that the Lord will bless us with good discernment, enabling us to test every spirit. Then pray for the inner witness of God's Spirit. Read the Bible and have some knowledge of what the Bible has to say. If you have a good knowledge of what the Bible says you will be surprised how much harder it is for you to be deceived or misled. Read the Bible several times, not so much to study, but to get it into your heart and mind.

You might think, "Wow! Read the whole Bible, what a job." It is no harder to read the Bible than it is to read any other book. You would be surprised how quickly you can read through the Bible. Even if you don't study you will be amazed at how much of it you remember and retain. Make up your mind to do this. You will be doing yourself a favor and cutting down on your mistakes, as well as giving the Lord a chance to speak to you in that way.

The leading of the Spirit comes in many ways. Don't try to restrict God or box Him in, but be quick to recognize that leading no matter how it comes. Don't try to make the Spirit lead you the way that you want to go. Allow the Spirit to lead you the way He wants to do it. In scripture we find virtually hundreds of ways that the Lord led His people. For the most part, however, they failed to recognize the leading of God's Holy Spirit. Don't be like them!

Just to mention a few of the ways He may lead you:

- The Spirit leads through the Holy Scriptures.
- Through the authority structure of the church.
- By the pastors, ministers, priests and elders.
- He will sometimes speak to us in an audible voice.
- He speaks through our thought life.
- The still quiet voice of the heart.
- He can speak very clearly through our faith.

- He can speak through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, tongues, and interpretation.
- The spirit speaks through the mule sometimes.
- There are the offices of apostle and prophet that speaks if we will only recognize them.

The Spirit often uses man's intuition and the still voice of man's own spirit, although not many are aware of the differences between man's soul and spirit. When we can not discern the difference between our soul and spirit, we are unable to function at this level with God's Spirit. And yet, I believe this is where the Holy Spirit is manifested the most—In man's spirit. We suffer great loss in this area both as an individual and as the body of Christ.

As you read this book I want you to keep in mind I am not an expert on this subject. I do make mistakes. I feel very inadequate writing about this subject. I do believe there is a great need of teaching in this area. I am restricted by what I have seen, felt, touched, experienced and received from the Scriptures. This is what I am trying to set forth in this book. I am aware that many may not agree with me on some things. That is all right; just keep loving me and praying for me. I will make some mistakes that is inevitable, I pray there will not be to many.

In putting forth my experiences, I intend to share some of my mistakes as well as some of the right things. I don't really want to disclose my mistakes, but there are things to be learned from them. I am sure I am not the only one who has been taught obedience and humility in this way.

As I continue with this book, may the Lord's Spirit lead me and bless me; and for the reader I pray. "Lord give us ears to hear, eyes that see and a heart that comprehends.

CAN I KNOW GOD'S VOICE?

(John 10:2-5)--"But he who enters by the door is shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know his voice."

We find in this Scripture a reference to knowing, or hearing from God. Also in John 10:27 Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

I know that it bothers people when you say something like this: "The Lord spoke to me" or "The Holy Spirit told me." Well, He did speak to me, and if I said it different than that, I would be lying. I am sure that God has no problem speaking. But, do we have a problem hearing? The Lord speaks to all men. Some respond, not even knowing it was from God, claiming as they do that God does not speak to men today.

The first time I heard God speak to me and was aware of it, and, knowing it was indeed God, was right after people prayed for me to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I was thirty-nine years old. I want you to note this: It happened soon after others prayed for me to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I had gone to church for many years. If you had asked me if I were a Christian, I would have said yes, and I believe I was. I believe that God had spoken to me many times before, but I had not recognized it as Him. Why didn't I recognize His voice sooner? It had something to do with the following Scriptures, I am sure.

When the disciples were greatly distressed because Jesus spoke about leaving and they would no longer have Him to guide and direct them, Jesus told them these things:

(John 14:16-17)--"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you."

(John 14:26)--"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

(John 16:13-14)--"But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you."

For years, I thought that God spoke only to a few very special people, who were very holy. I have now come to the conclusion He speaks to sinners too. I am glad, for like Paul, I can say that I am the chiefest of sinners. For those who have the same mistaken idea, don't be hindered any longer. God wants to speak to you. In fact, He probably has something very important to say to you. You may need people to pray over you to receive the Holy Spirit, even if you have been a Christian many years.

I first experienced the Lord speaking to me when I was driving home about eleven-thirty one night. My wife and I had been going to my brother's house for several weeks to a prayer and Bible study. Two weeks before, they had prayed for me to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Already some dramatic changes had taken place in my life and in my wife's life also.

As I drove home, my mind was at peace. Pauline was half asleep. Suddenly, I heard a voice speak clearly. It said, "I want you to start

a meeting like that in your home." The voice was masculine, rather musical, gentle, but authoritative. It startled me! I looked at my wife; she didn't appear to have heard anything. I even looked in the back seat, for I thought someone must be there. No one was there. The next thing I thought, "It must be my imagination." It is amazing how quickly we can put these things away from us. Because we don't understand, we deceive ourselves into thinking nothing happened. I really think I didn't want to accept the reality that God was speaking to me, so I didn't give it a second thought. I quickly put it from my mind and went on driving down the road.

After about five or ten minutes went by, I heard the same voice again. It said, "Remember the commitment you made? Did you mean it?" I knew instantly it was GOD speaking to me! No one knew of the commitment that I had made but God. I had made that commitment seven years earlier. I had told no one, not even my wife. This is what I had promised seven years before: "God, if you are there and for real, I need you. If you will come and heal my marriage, straighten out my life, and give me purpose and direction, I will do whatever you ask."

Well, He sure had my attention now, and I knew it was God speaking. In John 10:14, it says we will know His voice. I knew it was His voice. It had nothing to do with feeling, or an emotional high. If you go by these things you will be deceived. Even as I know I am a child of God, I knew it was His voice.

Now that He had my attention, and I knew it was Him, He said, "Did you mean what you said?"

I thought about it for a few moments, and said, "Yes, Lord, I meant what I said."

He again replied, "I am asking."

My heart had a terrible sinking sensation and I said, "Lord, I can't do it."

He said, "I know that, but I can. Open your home so that I can bless others as I have blessed you. I will lead you by my Spirit. I will tell you what to say and show you what to do, and I will not allow you to be misled."

That was the conversation the Lord had with me. Some will believe it, others will not. That is

OK. I don't have to prove anything to anybody, and neither do you. I wrote down what I experienced as clearly as I can remember. I know that many of you could share other experiences of how you first heard God, and each would be different.

Can you dare to believe that God wants to, and will speak to you? Don't put God in a box. Don't have a voiceless God. Allow God a voice with which to speak to you. By your faith, be it unto you.

Don't allow others to put you in a box either, by telling you that God doesn't speak to just any ordinary, everyday person, but to only a select few. That is not the truth. He will speak to any man who has time to listen.

You can know God's voice.

Believe That God Can and Will Speak to You!

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I CAN KNOW GOD'S VOICE

I hope that in some way the Holy Spirit will give you confident assurance that you can know God's voice. As in everything else in our approach to God, faith is involved. You cannot draw near to God without faith. Even so, believe that God can and will speak to you! Stir up your faith in this area. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and help you. If there is doubt or unbelief in your heart, don't try to hide it; confess it; bring it into the light so it can be dealt with.

You may be one of the fearful ones, of whom there are many. The fearful ones are those who are afraid they will make mistakes. They believe that God can speak to them, or already has, but are petrified to act or move on what they hear because they might make a mistake.

You will make mistakes! So what? Look in the Bible, and check to see if any of the great men and women made mistakes ...join the club. This is how we learn everything, by trying and making mistakes. It is not such a heaven-shaking thing if you should make a mistake. What is sad is not to have learned from it. I really do encourage you to try experimenting a little bit in listening to God, and not only that, but doing, acting on what you hear. Oh, if it is far out, don't do it! If you are directed to hurt someone, like leaving your wife and kids, or hearing a voice that tells you to shoot somebody; that is not from God. But, for an example, you might get the suggestion that you should tell your wife you love her; then do it. Maybe you'll hear, "Help your pastor". Do it. You will be surprised how quickly you will come to recognize His voice, and how pleasant it will be to follow it.

You will make mistakes! Some of the things you do will not be received properly. The enemy will try to confuse you. You will go

to wrong places and do wrong things, but at least you will be on the move, and through it the Holy Spirit will teach you.

As I have stated in the past, I can only share to the extent that I have experienced and touched of the things of God. This is the way that God has taught me. I made many mistakes, but in spite of the mistakes, I came to know the voice of the Holy Spirit more and more clearly, and so will you.

I want to tell you that the first time I heard God speak, it was in an audible voice. One other time I heard an audible voice, but apart from that, I began to hear from "inside". Don't make the mistake of thinking God is going to speak to you out loud all the time. After speaking to a lot of people who have known the voice of the Lord, I find that He seldom communicates this way. Don't close your mind. Be ready to receive whatever He wants to say to you, in whatever way He chooses to communicate.

Please do not make the mistake that God's confirmation of something is His voice. It is not. That is but a sign, and if you continue to rely on this method all the time, you will box your self in. I will amplify this in a later chapter, entitled "Imagination Or Confirmation". The Lord also shows us our direction many times by circumstances. That is not His voice, either. We can recognize that God is directing our path and still not know His voice.

By now you probably realize that I am trying to remove some of the misconceptions about God's voice. I am not saying these other things do not come from God. I am only saying they are not the voice of God.

Another misconception, and I suppose a touchy one with some, is the Scripture. We hear this very often, "The Bible really spoke to me; it came alive and jumped right out at me." Others will say, "I don't hear God speak to me inside, but it doesn't matter, for He speaks to me through the Scriptures." Yes! God speaks to us through the Scriptures, but that is still not His voice. It is His

written Word. You and I need to hear God speak through the Scriptures. But, we also need to know His voice.

There is one other area I would like to mention, and again it is very sensitive. We often hear people say, "The Lord really spoke to me today through the pastor." No doubt He did use that person to bring a certain truth or revelation to your heart and mind. And it was from God. People often come to us and say the same thing. It makes us feel good to think that somehow we were able to reach that heart with a special message. It still was not His voice, even though it came from God, through us.

You might say, "What is this guy trying to build up to, anyway?" I am building up to this. There is nothing more exciting or precious than knowing that inner voice of God speaking deep in our inner parts.

Why is this important?

When we reach this stage of "knowing His voice", He is able to speak to us inside and then use the pastor, Scripture, circumstance, whatever -- to confirm outwardly. As a result, we make fewer mistakes.

I have come to understand that the inner voice of the Spirit will NEVER conflict with the written word of the Scriptures. It will bear witness to the Scriptures. The opposite is true, also. The Scriptures will never be in conflict with the inner spirit, the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures will always bear witness with the Holy Spirit of God.

So we have the written Word and the inner spirit that always bear witness of one another. We don't have to be afraid to hear the inner voice. We do want to know the Scriptures. I think it comes down to this: we need both, and if we are well learned in both, we are not apt to be misled.

Again, I say we don't have to be afraid to hear that inner voice. We must become sharp at testing all things. There is more chance of being misled by not knowing His voice, than by knowing it.

I remember at a certain point in my walk when I wanted to know His voice, this happened: As I was praying one day I perceived very clearly that I was to be involved in a local meeting in my church. I was to lead this meeting. Soon thereafter, the opportunity came about to have a meeting in our church-owned school, one night a week. I mentioned this to other Christian friends whom I respected and esteemed as being further along in Christian maturity than me. They all told me the same; "No, that is not from God, don't get involved." I became confused. I was so certain it was from God, but I held off because of what these friends said. Confusion came in like a great cloud. I did not make a move for several weeks. The confusion was still great. One part of me seemed to be saying "Move ahead", while the other part was saying, "If you do, you will make a mistake." Finally I could not stand it any longer. I couldn't bear to be torn back and forth. I went before the Lord in prayer and cried out to Him, "Lord, what am I to do?"

He said, "I have already told you what you are to do. You need to decide to whom you are going to listen, Me or man."

I knew what the Lord meant. I had to decide once and for all, could I trust that inner voice or not? I knew what the Scripture said. Go out into the whole world---He will open the doors- --be a light to the world---teach others about Jesus---spread the word---take advantage of every opportunity. The word that I had heard was not contrary to the Scriptures. I decided my friends had made a mistake, and I made up my mind to be obedient. I telephoned about the meeting I was supposed to have. They said, "I am sorry, it is too late." That door never opened again. I learned a good lesson. There is a time and a season. Don't delay too long. Sometimes the opportunity passes us by. But something else happened. I decided once and for all to weigh and test things more thoroughly in the future, to listen to my brothers and sisters in the Lord and to weigh

and test what they have to say, also. Does it line up with the Scriptures? Is what they are saying coming from God? I have found all too often that well-intentioned Christian people are quick to tell you this or that, but far too few of them even try to consider what God might be saying in each situation.

You see, the mistake I made was listening to men instead of God when the Holy Spirit spoke to me. The door opened wide; the Scriptures bore witness, but I blew it because I listened to what men had to say.

I know God's voice; so do many others; so can you. Dare to adventure with God in this area.

4

WHICH VOICE IS GOD'S

When we begin to listen inside, we become aware that there are several voices trying to direct us in several different ways. And indeed there are. If we had been aware of this sooner, it might have saved us a lot of misery.

You might then say, "How am I going to tell them apart?"

It is a matter of discernment and testing. The Bible tells us to test every thought. The church has suffered great loss because we, as individuals, fail to test our thoughts well.

The Scriptures also say, "My people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge." This, I believe, is one of the areas in which we lack knowledge. We lack knowledge of ourselves, our thought life and how God speaks in us. One Scripture fits in very well here: (Hebrews 4:12)--"For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

It is interesting to note, if you bring this into context with the other parts of the Scripture around it, it is speaking about the people led by Moses never entering into God's rest. What would this Scripture have to do with God's rest? These people never learned how to commune inside with the Spirit of God. They didn't know His voice, to say nothing about being obedient to it. In the third chapter it says, "Today when you hear His voice, harden not your hearts as when they provoked me." It is talking about a "heart condition", not an outer condition. Another Scripture says, "They offer me lip service and their hearts are far from me."

Let us be sure that we do not make the same mistake and harden our hearts, but that we listen carefully to hear what God is saying to us and be obedient to Him.

Many times when I have talked about the soul and the spirit, people's response has been like this: "I thought the soul and the spirit were the same thing." If that is the case, why would the Word of God have to divide the soul and the spirit? Indeed, the soul and spirit are distinctly different, and we need to distinguish between the two. In the Book of Romans it says, "As many as are sons are led by the Spirit." Not by the soul, but by the Spirit. How can I be led by the Spirit if I cannot recognize the difference between the soul and the spirit? You can't!

So here I am back to where I started. I began to listen inside and I heard several voices.

Which one am I to believe? The spiritual man, of course. Fine! But which one is he?

For my own benefit, I break down the voices into four groups:

1. My own natural mind, my own thought life.
2. The spiritual man within me, and his thought life.
3. The voice of God, brought by the Holy Spirit.
4. The enemy Satan, the deceiving spirits.

I found that I was receiving thought life from all four of these sources. It can be very confusing until you learn to sort them out.

The Holy Spirit led me to a very good book at this time in my Christian walk. The book is, entitled *The Spiritual Man* by Watchman Nee. It was hard to understand, and very slow reading, but excellent. I learned a lot about myself and all my parts. Reading that book, I began to understand where all the voices were coming from, and how to sort them out. The Holy Spirit used that book to show me the separation of my soul and spirit. In other words, He began to show me the difference between the two.

As I began to test my thought life, it became very obvious to me the thoughts that were coming to me from the tempter. It also became obvious what was coming forth from my own thought life. Then I became more and more aware of the thought life that was coming forth from my spirit, and that there was a difference in the ones that came from the soul and those from the spirit. I began to get excited about this. This did not happen overnight, it took several years and is still in process, a dividing of the soul and spirit, a growing in knowledge of the God within, and His voice.

Even as I sit here writing this, I rejoice in the fact that I can sit here and rest in Jesus. It doesn't matter what others think. It doesn't matter what they say or where they think I should or should not be. I have peace in the inner man, a peace that no one else can give me. I also know that if God wants me to be doing something else, or to be somewhere else, He knows where I am. He can speak; I can hear.

Right now I am in Melbourne, Florida staying in the home of a friend who is on a trip ministering. My wife and I are here for a month, doing nothing more than enjoying ourselves, resting, and writing this book. No meetings, no ministry, no travel.

A few years ago I would have had a hard time staying here for a whole month. You want to know why? I would have been bothered, wondering what other people were thinking? I would be feeling guilty because other people were hard at work on many jobs, yet helping to support this work. The enemy would be plaguing me with all kinds of thoughts like this: You should be out ministering. You are letting down your supporters. Now I know something. I am being obedient. I am right where God wants me to be, doing just what He wants done at this time. My wife and I need to rest and I need to write.

The people who are supporting us are giving to the Lord, not to us. It is God's provision for us, and I need to be doing what the Holy Spirit tells me, not what others think I should be doing. This in turn has brought me to a place where I try to please God and not man.

As a result, I have found peace and rest within my soul and spirit. In allowing the Holy Spirit to show me the difference between my soul and spirit, it destroyed one of the strongholds of Satan. It set me free of the guilt trip. It set me free of being a respecter of persons and the fear of what others think.

What has destroyed this work of the devil? It is because I know which voice is God's. It is because I've learned to recognize His voice.

You will discover, as you get to know His voice, the strongholds will come down in your life too. You will come into a new place of rest in Jesus Christ.

Thank God we can know His voice.

5

THINGS WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND

I want to share some rather strange experiences that happened to me in 1965. This was before I came to know the Lord in the way that I do now. I did not know the Bible at all, nor was I very interested in spiritual things.

Pauline's father was a truck driver. My wife had always said she would not marry a truck driver because they were never home. Well, I was not a truck driver, I was a lineman, so she married me. Soon after that, I became a truck driver. She was not very happy, to say the least. I spent a lot of hours away from home. It paid a little better than many other jobs in the area, but even that was not too much. In addition to this, I was working at building up my electrical contracting business.

My only real response to God, a few years earlier, had been my appeal to Him to heal my marriage, straighten out my life and give me purpose and direction. In return, I agreed to do whatever He asked. This happened about five years before. I hadn't thought about this very much, and had done nothing about it. But God was at work in our marriage and it was improving all the time.

My truck "run" took me from northern Vermont to Long Island and New Jersey. I would leave about 5 P.M., drive most of the night, deliver the load in the morning, and drive back that afternoon and evening, hoping to be home by midnight so I could get a little rest. Next morning, I'd get up, take care of my electrical work that day, and have another load to go out at five or six o'clock that evening. This was my schedule. I went out usually three times a week. I got pretty tired and worn out. And to top it off, the electrical work was steadily increasing. I knew that I could not

keep this up for any long period of time. I had to make a decision to either drive or do the electrical work. I suppose it would seem like a simple decision to most people, but our home state, things are not always easy, so I wanted to keep both jobs going as long as possible. In Vermont winters are long and cold, without much work, and little money. The trucking slowed down in the winter, but there was still enough to keep me going. The electrical work was bad in the winter, too, when the summer people were all gone. The local people had work done only when it was absolutely necessary. In this situation, I had no unemployment benefits, and I really didn't want to starve. About this time strange things began to happen to me that greatly influenced my decision.

I had gotten in very late one night and I was dead tired. I had to get up early because there was a lot of electrical work to do. When I arose, I was just as tired as I was when I lay down. I went about getting the electrical work done as quickly as I could, because I had another load to go out about six that evening. That afternoon I got home about 4 P.M., went into my living room, flopped down into a big, easy chair and went instantly to sleep. I should have gone to bed, but I knew if I had, I would never wake up in time to go out with the truck that evening.

I had a dream: I was in my truck and it was as if I had just jerked awake after falling asleep at the wheel. The truck seemed to be tilted over sideways, and I was traveling quite fast. There were funny little lights coming right at me, which then disappeared right over the top of the cab. Right then I woke up. I was covered with sweat; my clothes were soaking wet, and I was frightened. It was so real; it was as if I was actually in that truck. I was some shook up. It took me about half an hour to get over it, so I could function properly. Well, I went on my way for another week and a half, and didn't think too much of it. I had always dreamed a lot, only not quite so real. One night, I drove out headed for Long Island, with the fear of falling asleep bothering my mind. I was about a hundred miles down the road when I felt a little dopey, so I stopped and had some coffee and pie. I had an extra cup of black coffee to keep me awake, but I was still bothered by that fear. I headed down the road

once again and had not gone more than fifteen miles when I woke up in the exact situation I had dreamed. The truck was tilted sideways; the little lights were coming right at me over my head. I was in a very precarious situation. The truck was carrying a thirteen foot high load of post and rails. If I ever hit anything, I would be a goner. That cab would have flattened like a matchbox. The left side of the truck was on the pavement; the right wheels were down in the ditch on the side of the road. I was traveling about fifty miles an hour. I was in a rural Vermont town, and the lights that were flying over my head were the guard posts that my front bumper was cutting off. The truck was on the verge of tipping over. A few hundred feet in front of me was a cement culvert where a drive way went into a home. I was headed straight for it and could do nothing about it.

To think of it now, I realize that I was not even scared at the time, but I knew that I would be finished if I hit that cement. I turned that wheel hard to the left, knowing at the same time, that I was going over. I was only a few feet from the cement and I was still in the ditch. The front wheels could not pull me out, they were just skidding along. All of a sudden, the truck shot right up in the air about four feet, and right over the cement. The front wheels hit the middle of the driveway. They were already turned to the left. I shot right across to the other side of the road. With a lot of effort, I turned the wheels to the right, and the truck swung back on to my own side of the road. The whole load groaned and tipped heavily to the other side. I was careening down the road with the whole truck, load and all, tipped and actually balanced up on the left wheels of the tractor and trailer. Wow! What a feeling that was. The whole thing came back down on all the tires again. It rocked back and forth a couple of times and then sailed on and was OK.

I pulled over to the side of the road. I was shaking all over. I just sat on the running board; I was too weak to stand up. I knew that I had just been saved by a miracle.

When I could get up, I walked back to that driveway to see what had saved me from that cement. Not five feet in front of the cement

was a big pile of dirt and debris in the ditch, which, when I hit it, served as a buffer and lifted me right over the cement. The road workers must have been cleaning out the culverts and had not removed the dirt they had taken out of them.

I didn't fall asleep again on that trip!

About a month went by. Again, under very similar circumstances, I had another dream. I was sitting in the same chair, feeling very tired, knowing I had to go out with another load in a couple of hours.

In this dream, I was not in my truck. I was on a hill; fresh snow was on the road. I was looking down from above and I could see one set of tire tracks going down the hill. Halfway down, they turned off the road and went over the bank. In my dream, I walked to the bank and peered over. Way down in a hole I could see a truck smashed up and burning. The first thing that came to my mind was, "My truck has smashed up - and I am dead." Then I woke up the same as before, frightened and soaked with sweat. What was so frightening was that it was so real. I have dreamed all my life, but these were more real than any dreams I had ever had.

Two weeks went by. I started out with a load one night and about an hour later it started to snow. Well, we Vermonters are used to snow, so that didn't bother me too much. I kept going.

As I was approaching the top of the largest mountain I had to go over, I noticed there was about two or three inches of snow accumulating on the road. When I started down the other side, I could see only one set of tire tracks on the road, and part way down the hill, they went off over the edge of the bank. I pulled off to the side of the road and walked to the edge. Looking over, I saw the exact accident I had seen in my dream.

I tell you - it gets a little unnerving when you start seeing the future before it happens. I was beginning to be troubled in my mind about this. I didn't tell anyone, for fear they would think I was crazy.

A couple of months went by and even though I was apprehensive, nothing more seemed to happen. I began to relax a little bit, and then it happened again. The circumstances were the same. I was resting in my easy chair. I was very tired and had only a short time to relax.

I started to dream: I was in my truck again. It seemed to be late at night; the traffic was light. I was traveling about sixty miles an hour. It was on the open highway and, although there were some homes and businesses along the road, they all seemed to be closed. All of a sudden, at my left I could see car lights coming on as a car shot out of a business driveway and right across the road in front of me. I saw this man's face looking up at me from the car. I was that close. Then I hit him right in the side. Then I woke up. I could still see the terrified look on that man's face. Again, I was soaked with sweat. It was so real, as if I had actually been there for that few moments.

About two weeks went by and it happened just as I had already experienced it in my dream.

What happened was this: A drinking place had just closed and this guy was drunk and never saw me coming. He pulled right in front of me. I hit his car near the back wheel. Thank God I didn't hit him more toward the front. The man was not hurt, but the car was damaged.

After this dream (or premonition) happened to me for the second time, I began to think -- someone is trying to tell me that it is time to stop driving. When it happened to me the third time, I was convinced. I didn't need another warning to quit while I was still alive, and I did.

One other dream that was involved with this series of events I haven't shared as yet, and I really didn't want to, but I know that I must.

I had one recurring dream for about a year. This was different from the others in that it occurred during my regular bedtime and it wasn't as real or terrifying. I would be driving the truck and I would come to this one special bridge, a high one, over a large river. I would get half way across the bridge, then something always seemed to go wrong with the front of the truck, and I would go over the edge and crash into the river.

When I quit the trucking job, the dreams stopped also, even the reoccurring one. I do believe the dreams were from God, and that if I had continued that job, I would have landed at the bottom of that river. I know the reoccurring one was a dream. I don't believe the others were. I believe that God placed me in those visions of impending disaster, through the power of the Holy Spirit as a warning to me, and by His grace I have been saved.

6

THE HINDRANCE WITHIN

(1 Corinthians 2:14)--"But the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

If we begin to look and listen within, we find that our natural mind and natural reasoning are a hindrance to receiving the things of God.

If we are truly interested in following the leading of God's Spirit within, we had better pay heed to what the Scriptures tell us about the danger of leaning on our own understanding.

(Proverbs 3:5)--"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."

This is the stumbling stone for many. It is not easy to stop leaning on your own understanding.

Think of this kind of situation: A man thirty- five years old, who has two children going to school, a job that pays adequately, a home with a mortgage, and a wife who is quite secure with all this. Then, the Spirit of God within says, "Give up your job. Sell your home and prepare for a ministry by going to Bible School."

Let's say that this person were you. Imagine yourself going around and telling all your friends, your colleagues, and fellow workers about it. What would they say?

Would they say, "That's not reasonable. You are out of your mind to do that." Their natural mind would have a hard time accepting such an idea, and so would yours. Would God say such a thing to us? Yes! Even so, most people would reason that a man would

have to be a fool to make such a move. Every bit of reasoning within him would be speaking against such a move. You would need to have a real heart toward God to make such a move. Your security would be gone, and so would some of your friends.

Your boss or bosses would be disgusted with you. Some, if not all of your relatives would think you were crazy and irresponsible. What about your retirement? What about your children and their school and college? Paul said, "I have become a fool for Christ, I have suffered the loss of all things for the sake of Christ, that I might know Him."

Right now, you might be thinking that I'm laying it on a little heavy.

But I am not! I am telling it like it is. If there are people reading this book for the purpose of drawing nearer to God -- wanting to be led by the Spirit of God -- you have to become a fool in the eyes of other men. Knowing this, do you still want to go on? For that is the price of being led by the Spirit. You will have to lean toward the heart and away from your own reasoning. There is no other route. You can not walk two ways at once.

(Romans 8:5)--"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

When I read about the wonderful miracles in the Bible, I often think how great it would be for that kind of power to work through me. Did you ever notice the foolish things these men had to do to cause the miracles to happen? Would you want to mix some of your spittle with mud and put it on a blind man's eyes? That is not reasonable. Would you want to go lie on a dead person's body, hoping that it can come back to life? That is not reasonable. Are you willing to become a fool so that the mighty power of God can move through you?

One of the requirements for us to be led by the Spirit of God is this: We must become fools and turn away from our old way of reasoning, not worrying about what other people think or reason in their natural mind.

7

ARE YOU A MYSTIC?

After reading the title of this chapter, I am sure some of you were thinking, "Of course not," and what might have popped into your mind was some Hindu, in a trance, sitting cross-legged.

I heard a friend of mine say this on a teaching tape: "Not all mystics are Christians, but all Christians should be mystics!"

I am sure Paul, Peter, John, and all the other Apostles were mystics.

Let me give you my definition of what a mystic is. A mystic is a person who can receive or understand spiritual things that the natural mind cannot. A mystic is a spiritual man, whose spiritual senses have begun to function.

So don't be afraid of becoming a mystic, a spiritual man, and understanding spiritual things. It doesn't mean you have to sit in a trance for hours, leaving your mind open to anything that wants to take it over. That is very dangerous, and you will be leaving yourself wide open to every evil spirit that comes along. The Bible tells us we are to guard our hearts and minds. What we want as spiritual people are listening hearts and active spiritual minds to test everything that comes to us, so that we can receive that which is good and reject that which is bad.

Paul understood these things very well. He spoke to the Corinthians thus: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of the flesh, as to babes in Christ."

What did Paul mean? I believe he meant that he could only speak to them on a purely natural, reasoning level. He could not speak to

them as men who have learned to listen and understand spiritual things.

The Corinthian church was really amazing, because the gifts of the Spirit were functioning in their midst, and yet they had not learned to function as spiritual men. The same thing is true today. Some fellowships have the manifestations of the gifts, and yet apart from that, they function at the natural level and not as spiritual men, and don't even know it. May God keep us from such a condition.

Paul gives a good teaching on this, (1 Corinthians 2:10-16) "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11)For who among men know the thoughts of a man except the spirit of a man, which is in him? Even so, the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12)Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God. 13)Which things we also speak, not in words taught in human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14)But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15)But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. 16)For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Do you understand that teaching from Paul? You need to, if you want to be led by the Spirit. He is telling us we need to be mystics, receiving revelation in our hearts and spirits and then speaking it forth as spiritual men.

You might think, "I can't be like Paul and receive revelation like he did!" Yes, you can and you need to. You say, "I don't have the ability." Read verse 12 again. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God."

Note it says, "We have received." If indeed you have received the Holy Spirit, then you have the ability you need.

What is it you have received through the Spirit? The ability to know the things of God.

In verse 13, it tells us who is going to teach us these wonderful things. It says "...taught by the Spirit."

What natural mind could teach you to be a mystic, a spiritual thinker and speaker? None! So God takes care of that. He sends His own Spirit to teach us to be spiritual.

Going back to verse 11, isn't it strange, that we live so many years not even knowing our own thoughts? With all these voices within us, there is confusion and uncertainty until we become spiritual people and sort out our thinking, and find our own thoughts.

Verse 11 says, "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except: the spirit of the man which is in him."

Something you and I must take into account if we are to walk as spiritual men is this: There is human wisdom, and there is spiritual wisdom. The human wisdom sounds very reasonable, and therefore it is very easy to be taken in by it. Spiritual wisdom is not as easy to receive, because it does not sound reasonable. For example, in the Old Testament, were the prophets wise? Yes, they were, but the people rejected them and called them lunatics. What about the false prophets? Were they wise? No. They had human wisdom, not spiritual wisdom, and yet the people received them.

Do you think there is any human wisdom in the Church today? Is anyone taken in by it? Where is the man who can appraise and test this properly and not be taken in by human wisdom, which sounds so reasonable? Can you or I? Yes, but only if we function on the spiritual level, as spiritual men.

THE HOLY SPIRIT VERSUS OTHER SPIRITS

Several years ago, my wife and I were sitting on my living room couch praying. As I began to receive a prophetic word, I spoke it out loud so that Pauline could hear it also. The message was about another person. The content of the message was that there was no hope for this person--That we might as well give up trying to reach this person, and stop praying.

My wife and I both came to the same conclusion that this was not a message from God, through the Holy Spirit. It was a "lying" spirit that was not from God at all. It was a message, most certainly, but it was from a spirit which was not the Holy Spirit.

Can this type of thing happen to a Christian? Of course it can, and it happens more often than we realize. Why do you think the Bible tells us to test every spirit, every prophecy, every word that comes forth? Because not all are from God. Should I be really upset because a lying word can come through me? No! I should be aware that it can, and be glad when someone discerns it as a lying spirit.

I recall an incident during a conference, when the people leading the conference had prayed ahead of time, asking that no one be allowed to come forth and speak a word, unless it was properly tested. About the second day, this man came up and said he had a word for the body. One of the leaders said the guy was OK and never asked what he proposed to say. This man went before the assembled group and under the power of a spirit he reviled all the people who had worked so hard to bring about this conference. What he said was filled with bitterness, hatred, lies, and every evil thing. Then he went back to his seat, thinking he had done a great ser vice for God.

As far as I know, he was never corrected. No one stood up and challenged the lies he uttered or confronted the evil spirit. Some of the people may have left that conference believing that what he said came from God.

If any man believes he is spiritual enough to get up in a meeting like that and deliver such a message, then he should be spiritual enough to receive correction.

As we begin our journey as children of God led by the Spirit, we need to be aware that there is more than one spirit. We don't need to be afraid of them, only aware of them, knowing that they will give messages and try to make us think they come from God.

Are you aware that people try to lie to you every day -- that some people just do not tell the truth? We all know this, and hopefully are not taken in by them too often. But there are times, no matter how wise we think we are, when someone puts it over on us. We take our lumps and learn from them, hoping we won't be taken in again. That's the way it is in the spiritual realm. At first we get taken in, fooled, deceived. Then, as we become wise, we are not taken in so readily any longer. We don't have to be afraid of these spirits. We must be wise to them and recognize their voices and not be led by them. There is a difference between the voices of these spirits and the Holy Spirit, and you will have to learn that difference experientially. I can only tell you about it.

We still have another spirit that needs to be discussed and understood if we are to be led by the Holy Spirit.

There is the Holy Spirit, the evil spirits and our own spirit. Not only does the Holy Spirit have a voice, the evil spirits have voices, and also our own spirit has a voice.

I need to come to the place where I recognize the voice of my own spirit. Why? In Romans 8:14, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." Galatians 5:18, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

I believe the meaning of these scriptures is this: We are not only led by the Holy Spirit, but by our own spirit as well. A spiritual man is one led by his spirit, not by his soul or flesh. In other words, we begin to recognize our spiritual man; and more than that, we allow him to dominate over the soul and the flesh. Our own spirit submits to the Holy Spirit, but leads the soul and the flesh if we will allow it.

At times I am sure all of you feel torn inside, as if there were a war going on inside of you. There is! The Scriptures tell us that the flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh -- that they rise up against one another.

The soul does not always want to do the things of God. It doesn't even want to do the things that our own spirit wants to do. We find a war going on between our own spirit and our soul life. Our soul life wants to do its own thing; it doesn't want to submit to the spirit and take second place. This is where the will comes in. If your will is passive, you will never be led by the Spirit. Whichever desire within you is strongest at a given moment will lead, whether it is a fleshly desire, soulish desire, or a spiritual desire. Therefore, you must use your will, and decide to listen to your spirit and be obedient to it.

Your spirit does have a voice; it does hear; it can speak. Learn to recognize your spiritual voice inside of you; allow it to lead you as long as it isn't contrary to the Holy Spirit. Then you will indeed be a spiritual man.

THE NATURAL MAN/THE SPIRITUAL MAN

I have spent a lot of time so far speaking about voices within and their various sources. There are other things that come from within which we must also familiarize ourselves with if we are to be led by the Spirit. There are times when I am led just by a knowing. This is not by a voice or a thought, but just a knowing, deep inside. For example: Do you have Jesus in your heart? Is He with you? Many of you could say "Yes." How do you know He is there? Prove it to me. You would maybe say, "I can't prove it to you, but I know He is." That is the kind of knowing I am talking about. At times, this is the way the Spirit will lead us, but we must learn to look for the knowing deep inside.

At other times I am led by feelings. I know what some of you will say, "You can't trust your feelings. You will be misled." It depends on the kind of feelings you are talking about. There are feelings within you that can be trusted. They are spiritual feelings. Some times in my spiritual man, I can feel what God is feeling; I can feel what other people are feeling; I can feel just what direction I am to take in different situations.

There is yet another area I must speak of which is vital for the person who wants to be spiritual. We must become intuitive people. The mystic, the spiritual man, functions at a different level than the natural man. The natural man functions at the level of the reasoning mind, the laws of nature. The spiritual man functions intuitively, in a spiritual realm, where the natural reasoning and laws don't work. I would choose to call it the fourth dimension.

I don't want to go any further in that direction right now. The reason I talked about the things I did is to show that our spiritual

man has feelings; he has a voice; he has hearing. The Scriptures are quite clear on this, that when we are born of the Spirit of God, a whole new set of spiritual senses come alive in us. We can see spiritual things; we can hear spiritual things; we can speak spiritual things; we can feel spiritual things. Wow! Isn't that great!

So, all of sudden we have two sets of senses. One set is for the natural things; the other set is for the spiritual things.

Before, we were blind to the spiritual things. We were deaf to the spiritual things. Now our eyes and ears have been opened. Praise the Lord! But all of a sudden I have a problem. I've got two sets of senses to deal with instead of one. This causes confusion in our lives when we are not used to two sets of senses. We don't know how to separate and use them.

Our natural man and our spiritual man are very much alike, and yet they are different. They are alike in these ways: They have sight, hearing, speech, feelings, emotions, and a thought life. Think about this. Did you ever have mixed feelings about something? Did you ever have mixed emotions? Did you ever have mixed thoughts? Of course you did. Why? Because your spirit was feeling one way about something, and your natural man was feeling another way about it, both at the same time.

If the spiritual man and the natural man are alike in all these ways, then what is different about them? The spiritual man is spiritual, and all these senses work on the spiritual plane. These are the senses that I can touch God with. I can feel His joy and His grief; I can hear His voice; I can see God in certain ways.

With my spiritual senses, I can reach out and touch your spiritual man, even as with my hand I can reach out and touch your body. Any number of times I have sat across a room and listened to a person telling me his troubles. At the same time I'd be reaching out in the spirit and touching him inside where I could feel the fear, the hatred, the grief, the sorrow, whatever it was, locked deep inside. He was not even aware that it was there. As I would tell him what I

had felt in his heart, he would become aware of it and begin to deal with the real issue that was hidden deep inside of him. There are things like this buried in the hearts of many of us, and we are not aware of it until someone spiritual discerns it, or the Holy Spirit makes us see it. Then the victory starts to come.

This is what Paul was talking about when he said he was with them in spirit. How else could he sit in prison and yet know just how the church was hurting and stumbling and be able to minister right to the problem?

Paul was able to see spiritual things, feel spiritual things, hear spiritual things and speak spiritual things. All men born of the Spirit can do these things. Not all men do, but the capability is there.

We are spiritual men and we are natural men; we are both. We need to learn how to function on both planes. The thing that saddens my heart is that, so many in the church function only on the level of the natural self. If we are to follow Jesus and Paul and all the other great men and women of the church, we must begin to function on the spiritual level.

THE REAL YOU STAND UP

I often ask people this question: "What do you want from God?" Many times they answer, "I don't know. I haven't thought much about it." Going back to a scripture I used earlier, He brews 4:12, the latter part says, "...able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Now let me ask you another question, "What are your intentions?"

Going to Jeremiah 17:9, the Scripture says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick. Who can understand it?" Verse 10 goes on to say, "I, the Lord, search the heart. I test the mind, even to giving each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds."

Something I have learned about the heart is that it is not only deceitful; it is very fickle. In other words, the heart is not very faithful. The heart will often hear only what it wants to hear and nothing else.

For these reasons and many others, you cannot trust your own heart. It is deceitful, fickle, and hears only what it wants.

If you truly want to be led by the Holy Spirit, you cannot trust your heart or your own motivations, or your reasoning.

I have learned to be very careful when it comes to something I really want to do. It is easy to say the Spirit told me to do it as a cover up for what I really want myself. This happens to the best-intentioned people. Our hearts are deceitful. I have now learned to be careful when I feel that the Holy Spirit has told me to do something and I really want to do it myself. I hold back deliberately and ask God to confirm through some other means.

The following experience will show more clearly what I am trying to say. Several years ago, I felt the Lord telling me to be a speaker at a conference. My only problem was that I really wanted to do this, so I wasn't too sure about my motives. I told the Lord that I was not going to make any attempt to be one of the speakers. I said they would have to ask me very directly themselves. In a half hour, I received a call. It was from the man leading this conference and he said they had all prayed and were sure the Lord wanted my wife and me to speak at the conference. Now I knew that the Lord really wanted me there and I was not doing it on my own.

When we begin to test the spirits, the motives, the thoughts, the feelings, the heart, it is amazing how fast our spiritual walk increases, and the fewer mistakes we make.

Did you ever let anger lead you, or bitterness, or envy? Or did you ever let popularity, or peer pressure, or what other people were thinking or saying, be your guide? Did you ever let some hidden desire in your own heart lead you to do and say things that you would not usually do? I think I would be safe in saying we all have. Do you think as Christian people we still have these problems? Yes! To deny it would be to deceive ourselves.

If we deny it saying, "I am not like that," there is no help for us. If we say, "Yes, Lord, that is what I am like," He will be faithful in helping us. He will bring into the light the deceitful and evil intentions, the wrong motivations, so we can see them for what they are. Dear readers, don't be afraid to confront your own selfishness. I have a sneaky suspicion we all have our share of it.

When my kids were smaller, I used to say to my wife, "Let's take the kids to the movies to night." You know why I said that? I wanted to go to the movies myself. I don't know why we feel we always have to justify our actions.

I was looking at a magazine a few minutes ago and on the cover there was a picture of a woman holding a mask to her face. The caption at the bottom said, "Mask? or true manifestation."

I guess we all have our own masks that we wear each day. I think one of the reasons Jesus came to earth was to unmask us.

Before we became Christians, we had different masks for every occasion. After we became Christians, we started immediately to make a new set of masks again. One mask is very righteous, one is very holy, one is very spiritual, and another is very mature. The only problem is -- they are still masks that need to come off before the Christ in us can really be seen.

As Pauline and I travel about and talk with many different kinds of people in our evangelistic work, we have noticed many who are not very responsive to the church or to spiritual things. Many of them say, "They are hypocrites." "They are self-righteous." "They think they know it all." "They can't associate with us regular people." "They think they are better than we are."

What are these people talking about? And is it true? They are referring to the faces -- the masks, that they see.

As the body of Christ, we have the strange idea that if we appear as sinless and perfect, we can attract the whole world. I have discovered this; it is not my sin that turns people away from me. They can accept the fact that I sin. It is the mask which I use to cover things that they cannot accept, and they label it for just what it is... What people see is a false face and the pretense of being something I am not. Isn't it strange they see this more clearly than we do, and they label it properly even as Jesus did (hypocrite).

In the past year or so, several people who have been involved in the church for maybe ten to twenty years, have come to me and said something similar to this, "I am fed up with it all. I have tried everything. I have even gone to different churches. I have read the Bible. I have prayed. I have tried to be what they wanted me to be. I have tried to do what they wanted me to do, and I feel like I have failed. I don't really seem to be very different than I was when I started. I am not rejecting Jesus, but I am not going to worry about what other people say or think, any longer. I am just going to be

myself, and if Jesus wants to change me He can go ahead and do it."

Praise God! These people are getting rid of the masks and beginning to be real.

In the month of March, I talked with my son on the phone in Vermont and he told me they had a foot of snow, while I sit here in Florida with the temperature about seventy degrees. Had someone come along and asked me, "What are you doing in Florida?" I could very well have said, "The Lord sent me down here to write a book." That would have sounded very spiritual, but it would have been a lie. The Holy Spirit did not send me down there to write a book. The reason I went to Florida was because I wanted to go there.

The Holy Spirit did direct me to write another book on being led by the Spirit, but he did not tell me where I was to do it. It did not matter where I did it. I am a free person in Christ. I have a mind, and desires. The Lord wants me to use my mind, and He wants to fill some of my desires.

Last May the Holy Spirit spoke to me about this book. All He said was, "Plan ahead and set aside a month to work on another book." I knew I was to do it within a year. I picked the month, I picked the place and I told the Lord when I was going to do it. I also told Him where I wanted to do it, and He worked out the place for us to stay, because we didn't have a lot of money to spend. I could have gone some where else. I could have done it in another month. God gives us freedom in these things. Even if I had picked another state, God would still have provided a place for us. If it had been Texas, Maine, or California, it would have made no difference to the Lord. All that mattered was that I write the book. Don't become bound or afraid to act when you are led by the Holy Spirit. Don't just sit there when the Holy Spirit isn't telling you what to do. We are flesh and soul and spirit. There are certain things that come forth from our flesh that have to be taken care of. There are things

that come up from our soul life that have to be acted upon, and taken care of; there are needs of the spirit that must be acted upon.

I have to feed my body and meet its requirements. My body needs rest and sleep. My soul and my mind need to be nourished. I need to read a good book once in a while, go to a good show, have some good conversations, take a vacation, associate with different people. I need to pray and worship the Lord, spend time alone with Him, read the Bible, and seek His direction and voice for my life. I need to spend time with my family and relatives, even with the neighbors. There is indeed a time for every thing. Don't be a lopsided Christian. Take off all of your masks. The old ones and the new ones you have made are all distortions, none of them reveal Jesus Christ. Only the real you can reveal Jesus.

There are certain things that are very important to all of us. For example: maybe a special hunting trip you have always wanted, maybe a trip to Israel, maybe a visit to a special person far off, maybe some exciting thing you have never been able to do, or something you have never been able to afford, which you have always wanted.

For years, I have wanted to take a trip to the Northwest, to the Rockies and the national parks. I have waited and waited, thinking someday the Lord would send me out there. Last summer I prayed about it and told the Lord my desire. This is what the Lord told me: "If you ever want to go there, you are going to have to plan it yourself." So I did. I have set a future date, set the time aside, and my wife and I are planning to go.

I am aware that if the Lord has something more important for me to do in the meantime, He will tell me and I will change my plans accordingly.

Don't be afraid to plan and to look forward to things. Nothing will happen if you don't. I would suggest that you pray first and see if you have that freedom in your spirit to move ahead. If you do, then go ahead and plan. I don't have the money I need for such a trip,

but I am going to plan on it just the same, because I do have a God who can provide much. He's a God of miracles. Don't be afraid to be free and don't be afraid to be yourself. Take off all your masks so that people can see you as you really are, and so that the world can see Jesus in you.

ANXIOUS, GULLIBLE AND COMPULSIVE

One of the main reasons I made so many mistakes at the beginning of my Christian walk was because I was so anxious to hear from God, it made me gullible. I accepted every voice I heard as coming from God. I would not test things properly, and as a result, the enemy took advantage of this and sent me on some wild goose chases. I know many others have had similar experiences.

God doesn't seem to be in a hurry. We seem to think that everything has to be done at once. When my wife and I were filled with the Holy Spirit, we both knew that God had a full time ministry for us; yet it took seven years to come about. We received all kinds of confirmation that we were to travel and go to many places sharing Jesus Christ, but it was several years before we went outside our own state.

We often jump to hasty conclusions. If I had a boss and he told me to go to a teaching seminar, I would ask him, "When?" He would say, "May". Then I would say, "Where?" He might say, "Chicago." I might say, "For how long?" You see, we would learn some of the things we need to know by asking questions. Is God going to leave us ignorant of the basic things we need to know in order to do His will?

You might say, "Look at Abram; the Lord told him to come out from among the others and he did not know where he was going." That's right, he didn't know where he was going, but the Lord also mentioned, "...to the land which I will show you."

I remember an incident that happened to us some years ago. We came home for Christmas and had been there for a day or two,

when the Lord spoke to me and said, "I want you to go to New York City this week." I told my wife, but she refused to go. She said, "We just got home." Yet, I knew I was to go whether, she went or not.

Now, why would I act on this word from the Lord so quickly, and yet wait at other times? It was because He told me specifically where I was to go, and when. I already knew that when I got there, He would tell me what I was to do.

My wife decided to go after all, and when we got to New York, the Lord told me who I was to call. We got together with the couple I called and they shared that they had a problem which they were not able to handle. Their ministry had come to a standstill. By the Lord's grace we were able to deal with the problem and their ministry started growing once again, and has since become very effective.

I remember another time when the Lord spoke to me and said, "Will you go out West to a Bible school and leave your family here in New England?" That was kind of a shock. I had never left my family for any great period of time. I had to do some real searching in my heart before I could answer that. Finally I said, "Yes Lord, I will." I didn't pack up my bag and leave.

The Lord didn't tell me to depart. He didn't tell me to go anywhere. He had only asked me a question. I know He could have said to go to such and such a place and sign up for a certain school, but He didn't.

We don't always hear very clearly, so don't be afraid to say, "Lord, I don't know what you mean. I don't know what you want of me. Make it more clear to me, Lord."

So many people have made foolish mistakes, sold their homes, done foolish things, because they heard from God, but the message was not clear and they responded wrong, and too quickly.

Other times I have felt a great pushing to go or to act. There was a compulsion that I had to do this, or say that. One thing I have learned is that the Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He doesn't make anyone do anything. That would be infringing on their free will, and God does not do that. The enemy Satan will infringe on your free will, if you let him. I would dare say that anything which infringes on your free will is not from God; any compulsion that makes you do something is not from God. No matter how much it may seem like it.

I have made these mistakes. I have allowed compulsion to move me to say things and to do things in the name of the Lord, and they were not from God. I have run about, moved too quickly, not knowing where I was to go or when I was to go. In these situations, I didn't accomplish much; you won't either. I did learn from it, and so will you.

I have had other people tell me that they had to do this, or had to do that. No! You do not have to do this. No! You do not have to do that. I would encourage you to test each voice before you act.

Many times we hear this said: "I wish our meetings were more open. We are too restricted; our meetings need to be more free." Do you know that if you free a meeting it allows the enemy a lot of opportunity? Any meeting needs control, or authority. Be it a small or large get-together, it needs to be structured. There has to be a balance, of course, and there are times when things are too restricted and controlled by people.

May God help us to come to the place where we are led by the Holy Spirit, and our meetings are led by the Holy Spirit. I believe there is such a thing as a compulsive evil spirit. It somehow works on us against our free will, causing us to say and do things we wouldn't usually do. One of the ways it is manifested in smaller home meetings is when people who are not leading the meeting start talking and you can't shut them up. They're compulsive talkers. They take over and destroy the whole meeting, and they are not aware of the damage they are doing.

If you have a problem with this type of behavior, don't try to hide it. Tell others and ask for prayer that you might be helped. Most of the time others are aware of it already, but they don't know how to handle it, and are afraid they'll hurt your feelings if they say anything.

If you have anxieties that are always plaguing you, these are not from God either. Deal with them in the same way. Tell others that you have this problem, and ask for prayers and help for the situation. If you are anxious, gullible, or compulsive, and these things are moving you to do and say things all the time, you are not being led by the Spirit. Go to someone who can help you talk about these problems and receive prayer and healing.

A NEW ADVENTURE

Recently as I was listening to a tape, I thought of a book I was reading and I realized something about our Christian walk which I wasn't aware of before. Our Christian walk, led by the Holy Spirit, is an exciting adventure into the un known. There are several scriptures which bear this out.

(Isaiah 42:16)--"And I will lead the blind by a way they do not know; in paths they do not know I will guide them; I will make darkness into light before them and rugged places into plains. These are the things I will do and I will not leave them undone."

(Hebrews 13:13-14)--"Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."

This is exciting, because it is talking about the same place that Abraham was seeking. The Bible tells us we are strangers and pilgrims in a strange land. We need to get excited about this walk which lies before us. We are looking

for a city that does not have its foundations on this earth. It is more than an adventure; it is also a challenge. One friend of mine often prayed this way: "Lord challenge us." The only ones who find the Kingdom of God are the ones who seek it; the only ones who are going to hear His voice are the ones listening for it. One scripture tells us that violent men take the Kingdom of God by force.

Can we get the picture of what this is showing us? What I see is a group of people similar to the early settlers. These people want something more than they have and they believe there is more. They are not afraid to face a little hardship. They are not afraid to leave the old things behind. They are not going onward because

they have to, but because they want to. They face the unknown. Here is a real challenge; here is real adventure into a new spiritual realm, the next step in their walk with Jesus.

Let me ask you a question: Are you adventuring with God? Does your Christian walk seem like an adventure? Are you being led in new paths, or are you still walking the same old path -- only your terminology has changed a little? For some of you, it would be a scary adventure to go to another church or a different denomination other than your own. Maybe you need to, so you can see that in these other churches they lift up Jesus Christ too. They believe in the Father and the Holy Spirit. They believe in the same God you believe in. Their doctrine and traditions are a little different because of their background and teaching, but they do have faith in the same God, the same Jesus, the same Holy Spirit and the same Cross.

I'll tell you a story:

There were two men that lived in a secure valley, hemmed in by mountains. One man decided to go over the mountains and explore to see what else the world had that he had never seen. The other man said, "No I am going to stay here. I have everything; there is nothing more for me."

The first man left. He came back several years later and told the other man of all the wonders he had seen and all the different things he had done, and how much bigger the world is than just this valley.

So it is in our Christian walk. Many of us are like the man that stayed in the valley and thought he had everything, when he had very little.

Which are you? Are you the adventuresome pilgrim, or are you the man in his secure little valley?

I am not trying to put anyone down. If a man wants the valley and security that's fine. If a man wants to become a pilgrim, he has to leave the valley. If he wants to find something more, he has to leave the valley. If he wants to see and experience new things, he must leave the valley.

(Hebrews 13:13)--"Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." You may wonder why I keep bringing this up. If you want to be led by the Holy Spirit, He will lead you out of your secure, little valley and you will have to become an adventurer. Are you willing to pay that price?

If you want to be led by the Holy Spirit, you will have to do things you have never done before!

If you want to be led by the Holy Spirit, you will have to go places you have never been before.

If you want to be led by the Holy Spirit, you will have to say things you have never said before.

Some of you may get the idea that I am telling you to get out of your church. No! I am not saying that. I am still affiliated with the same church I have always been in. I am saying the Holy Spirit will require you to bring your faith out into the world and share it with others.

The first thing the Holy Spirit asked me to do was to open my home for a meeting. Both my wife and I had to struggle with that. You might think that's not very hard, but it was for us.

Next, He asked us to go into the nursing homes to visit, pray, sing, and even have some Sunday services. That was not easy either, but I wanted to go on with God, so I did it.

Then He asked us to put on a radio program. I had never done any radio work in my life. I told the Lord so. He said, "Go on the radio." After a lot of urging by the Holy Spirit, I went to the radio

station and bought a fifteen minute time slot. I planned to tape the program. If I made a mistake I could correct it. We tried to tape three times -- they were all terrible. Three days before we were to start, the Holy Spirit said, "Go and do a live show".

The first program we did, we were scared to death and trembling. The Lord did not fail us. He removed all the fear and trembling at just the right moment, and the program went very well and they continued to because, He was with us and helping us.

It was a new path. It was an adventure.

After that came the jail ministry. God wanted us to visit the prisoners. What I tried to do was get everybody else to do it. I tried all kinds of ways to get other people to go to the jail. Nobody would go. The Lord made it very clear to me that I was to go, not someone else. After several months, I went in fear and trembling. You know what? I was blessed. The prisoners taught me some things about God. They gave me more than I gave them. Another new path opened up. Now when I have the chance to visit the prison, I take advantage of it if at all possible. You could call it adventuring into new and uncharted territory.

One of the things I remember vividly was the time the Holy Spirit told me to tell others that I came in the Name of the Lord. This is how it happened: The Lord instructed me to go to a certain home where a very sick person lived. I had never been there before. He said, "When you go to the door, tell them you come in the Name of the Lord." I had never done such a thing before, and I imagined these people were going to think I was crazy. Well, we went anyway. When we got there, the woman of the house answered the door. I said, "You are going to think I am crazy, but I come in the Name of the Lord, Jesus Christ." She smiled and asked us in. "We have been expecting you," she said.

That just about blew my mind because no one knew we were coming except the Lord.

When we had entered the home and began to share, the woman told us they had been waiting all day. They had not left the house, because they some how knew that someone was coming to see them that day. When we drove up in the car, she knew that we were the ones they were expecting. The Lord healed her husband that night with a wonderful miracle. I am sure most of you would have a problem saying to someone else that you came in the Name of the Lord.

I thought I was not worthy to say such a thing. "Who am I," I reasoned, "to do such a thing? What are people going to think?"

The Holy Spirit asked me, "Are you a son of God? Are you a priest and a minister? Are you part of a royal nation? Are you a citizen of the Kingdom of God? Are you an ambassador for Christ?" The answer is, "Yes," for all of us who are born of God's Spirit.

Then He said "Are you going because you are sent by Me?"

I said, "Yes, Lord."

He said then, "Why can't you say, 'I come in the Name of the Lord?'" Other people have a problem with me saying it -- but I don't.

I can just as easily say that I write this book in the Name of the Lord, because He told me to. This is another exciting adventure into the unknown, a new path I am walking. A real life adventure story I am writing.

The Lord has led us through many paths and adventures by His Spirit, but that is not what is important to you. What is important to you is your paths, your adventures, your challenges. I hope that I am stirring you up a little bit. I believe that the Holy Spirit is trying to show every one of us a new path. He is trying to encourage you to step out in some new way where you have never stepped before -- put the sole of your foot in a place you have never trod before --

make you stand in a place where you have never stood before. Step out! Do it! Be bold and courageous. Don't hold back any longer.

I would like to share with you a scripture that the Lord has shown me over and over again, and it is always an encouragement and a strength to me.

It is God's charge to Joshua, and I believe to us also. (Joshua 1:6-9)
"Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."

"Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses, My servant, commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go."

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Can we take this word to ourselves? Read it over several times. What does it mean to us today? I believe it means this: I can go boldly forth in the Name of the Lord, led by His Spirit into new paths, and my God is ever with me and He shall never leave me.

LET THIS ATTITUDE BE IN YOU

(Philippians 2:5)--".. have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."

Jesus Christ did not come to build His own kingdom. He did not come to do great things for God. He did not come to accomplish His own will. Jesus came to accomplish the will of the Father. He came to do and to say what the Father wanted said and done. His attitude was to be obedient to the Father.

We all have our dreams of what we would like to be and what we would like to accomplish in this life's time. We all have our goals we would like to reach. Any person who wants to be led by the Holy Spirit will have to lay these things down. Where does the Holy Spirit lead us? He leads us in the same path He led Jesus, to accomplish the Father's work, to build His kingdom. That means giving up our desire to build our own kingdom, giving up our desire to reach our own goals. It is not important what I want to do. It may seem very important, but the only thing that is really important is to do the will of our Father in Heaven.

It is not important that you be a success. It is important that you successfully accomplish the work that God has for you to do here on this earth.

It is not important that you be the great minister, evangelist, or teacher. It is important that you minister, evangelize, and teach properly those whom God chooses to place in your hands.

There is an attitude in many of us Christians that says we have to be great, we have to be popular, we have to be the leaders, we have to be well known, or we've got to have the biggest church and the largest membership. This attitude is not from Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 2:3)--"...do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, let each of you regard one another as more important than yourself."

(Philippians 2:4)--"... do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

Notice it says, "... regard one another as more important than yourself." Jesus Christ regarded us as more important than Himself. He regarded the Father's will as more important than His own. The Father's work was more important than His. He delighted in doing the Father's will.

Notice that it says "...with humility of mind," also. Somehow true humility has to form within us before we can regard others as more important than ourselves.

I don't know about you, but I like to think that I am more important than you, smarter than you, more mature than you. There is something within me that doesn't like to be humble; it wants to be proud; it wants to sit at the head of the table; it wants to be admired. My God, help me to be delivered from this ugly thing within me that wants to play god and be god.

I sometimes think, "Well, he doesn't know any thing." "He never does anything right." "I'll keep control of this situation because I'm the only one who does it right." Do you ever have thoughts like this? Ugly, aren't they? Regard others as more important than yourself.

(Philippians 2:6)--"...Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."

(Colossians 3:10-14)--"... and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

"A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."

"And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you forgive."

"And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."

These scriptures are all talking about the same thing -- the attitude that was in Christ Jesus, the attitude that you and I need to have.

I was having lunch with a young man the other day, and we were talking about freedom. He kept labeling himself as being free in Christ and being a radical. After he had mentioned being a radical several times, I asked him if he was proud of it. He said, "What?" Again I said, "Are you proud of being a radical?" He looked at me for a moment and said, "I guess maybe I am."

Jesus was a radical, but He was not proud of it. Jesus was gifted, but He wasn't proud of that either. Jesus was spiritual; He was not proud of that either. He was not a boaster either, even though He had many things He could have boasted about.

Father, let this attitude be in me that was in Christ Jesus.

SERVE IN NEWNESS OF SPIRIT

There is yet another important truth we must understand if we are to be led by the Spirit. It is this: You cannot be led by the Spirit and the Law at the same time. You can know all these other things that I have already covered in this book, but if you are not ready to let go of the old outward practice of obeying a set of laws, rules and regulations -- then you will not be able to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, because you have not changed. The Holy Spirit will lead you to break some of those old patterns, just as surely as He led Jesus to break some of the rules of His day. Just as surely as the Holy Spirit led Jesus to a confrontation with the authority of that day, you will be brought to a confrontation with some of the authorities in your life that control your thinking and you will have to take a stand. You will either have to back down and submit to the Law, or continue along with the Spirit -- and not be very well liked.

I am aware that even in the writing of this, I may not be very popular with those who are under the Law and live by the Law. But, I am willing to pay whatever price is necessary to continue to be led by the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote a good deal about this. He was not very popular, you know. He was not popular with the Jews, and he was not very popular with the Church.

Listen to what Paul said, (2 Corinthians 3:6)-- "... who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life!"

Note that He made us ADEQUATE to serve the Spirit, but not ADEQUATE to serve the Law, the letter that kills. Did you ever try to fulfill the Ten Commandments? That is the letter that kills. You tried and failed. So have I. Why did we fail in our attempt to fulfill the Law? Because we are not ADEQUATE.

One of the things that angers me is how many people right in the church try to make us submit to the letter that kills when God himself has released us from that -- knowing that we are not ADEQUATE to obey it, or fulfill it.

This is the reason Paul was not very well liked by the Jews or by the church leaders. He told them they were released from the old system and from then on they were to be led by the Spirit - and not the Law.

Remember that we are not ADEQUATE to fulfill the old covenant, but we are ADEQUATE to follow the Spirit, and that fulfills the new covenant: "As many as are sons, are led by the Spirit."

(Romans 7:6)--"But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter..."

Is it hard to understand this scripture?

I have had people tell me that I am preaching against the Law. That's right, I am. We, as the Church, are not to be living by the Law; we are to be living by the Spirit. There are too many in the Church who don't understand this truth, and instead of teaching the people how to be led by the Spirit, they are teaching them to be led by Law -- by the letter that kills.

Jesus referred to these as blind leaders of the blind, who will all stumble into a ditch. Another reference made by Jesus says: "They stand in the doorway, but do not enter themselves and do not allow others to enter, either."

These were very direct references to those who were living by the Law and yet were not entering into the Kingdom of God, and who were even a hindrance to those who were trying to enter.

We find Paul asking the Galatians "Who bewitched you? You began by the Spirit and now you are trying to perfect yourself by

the flesh." Who bewitched them? Their teacher or pastor. Instead of teaching them to be led by the Spirit, he was teaching them to obey a bunch of laws and regulations.

Your teacher should be teaching you to be led by the Holy Spirit, not by him or the church.

It is very easy to be led by a minister, a priest, a group of elders, a church, a set of laws and regulations, or church ritual and traditions.

We are not to be led by these. They are a part of our church life, but they are not that which is to lead us.

The New Covenant is written in our hearts. Each one of us is to look to our heart, see what is written there for this moment of our life, and be obedient to that.

This is being led by the Spirit.

Each person who wants to reach spiritual maturity must learn to read what is written in the heart and be obedient to it.

Hebrews 10:16--"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them."

James 1:25--"But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does."

THREE BIG PROBLEMS

At some point in our lives, we recognize our need for God. We turn to Him, call on His name, and in some manner He touches our lives. We make some kind of commitment to Him and vow to love and serve Him; and then to our dismay we fall back into the old pattern and into sin. We read the Bible and see what pleases God. It says to pray and ask his forgiveness, and try to keep the Commandments; yet we stumble and fall into sin, again.

I finally realized I had three big obstacles obscuring my path keeping me from a right relationship with God:

- The first one was sin. Even when I would ask for forgiveness, I would fall into sin again.
- seemed to keep me in sin, even if I confessed it.
- The third big problem was trying to live up to the Ten Commandments, which I could not do. I failed every time.

I had heard many times that Jesus Christ had taken my sin on the cross, and the Scriptures bear witness to this. (Hebrews 10:12) "But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." That was great! My only problem now was I still fell into sin...

Then I found in another part of Scripture that something else happened when Jesus Christ was crucified -- He not only took my sin but some thing else.

(Romans 6:6)-- "... Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin..."

I would suggest that you read Romans chapter 6 several times, until you can relate to the fact that we were nailed on the cross with Jesus- -that is our old sin nature. That our sin nature was put to death, and buried with Him.

Read it until you can say, "I was crucified with Christ," and know it to be true.

So now we find that Jesus himself took care of the first two big problems: My sin and my sin nature. Now the third one, the Ten Commandments. Are you ADEQUATE to handle that? In the last chapter we found that we were not ADEQUATE to fulfill the letter of the Law.

(Colossians 2:14)--"... Having canceled out the certificate of debt, consisting of decrees against us which were hostile to us. He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

What is this scripture talking about? What is the certificate of debt? It is the Law, decrees against us which condemn us. What do the Commandments say very clearly? They say, "You are guilty; you are guilty; you are guilty!"

Did you notice what Jesus has done with the Law? He nailed it to the cross. He has removed it.

Now we find three things on the cross with Jesus:

- my sin
- my sin nature
- the Law

Do you want to be perfect? Who can make you perfect? One person, Jesus Christ. The Law or the keeping of the Law cannot make you perfect. (Hebrews 7:19)--"... For the Law made nothing perfect, but on the other hand there is now a better hope, through which we draw near to God."

What is that better hope through which we draw near to God? Jesus Christ. Romans 8:3 says something interesting about the Law: "...For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did -- sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh."

What is it that the Law could not do? Make you and me perfect. It could not take away our sin, or our sin nature.

Again in Hebrews 7:18--"For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment

Rom, 8:2 "...Christ Jesus has Set You
Free from the Law of Sin and Death."

because of its weakness and uselessness." What is the former commandment? Nothing less than the letters written in stone, the Ten Commandments given to Moses.

Note this:

- Romans 7:6--"...We have been released from the Law."
- Romans 8:2--"...Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death."
- Romans 6:14--"...You are not under Law, but grace."
- Galatians 5:4--"...You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

We should learn the lesson that the Bible is trying to teach us. A whole nation of people for hundreds of years tried to fulfill the Law, and they failed. Do you think that you can succeed where they failed? No, you cannot! Our success is through Jesus Christ, not through the Law.

The lawyers and Pharisees had a controversy with Jesus. They said, "You have come to destroy the Law." He said "No, I have come to fulfill the Law." Did Jesus fulfill the Law? Yes, He did!

For whom did He fulfill the Law? You and me. Why did He fulfill the Law for you and me? Because you and I could not do it.

When something is fulfilled, is it done? When Jesus fulfilled the old covenant, was it done?

I believe it was. A new covenant was brought in. When Jesus died on the cross, when Jesus fulfilled the old covenant, it came to an end, and a new one took its place. The new one was a covenant of grace and mercy and the Spirit. The old one was a covenant of Law, condemnation, and death -- the letter of the Law. Which one do you want to live under? Jesus took care of my three big problems - sin, sin nature and the Law.

AS MANY AS ARE SONS

(Romans 8:14)--"... For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

We find that Paul referred to the Christians as babies. He called them men of the flesh, carnal. He didn't say they weren't Christians; he did say they were immature Christians.

I think Romans 8:14 is saying something like this: As many as are mature persons - are led by the Spirit. I don't think it is saying that those that are not led by the Spirit are not children of God. There are many Christians who are not led by the Spirit, but they are still children of God, even though they are not yet mature men and women of God.

In the last chapter, I wrote about my three big problems. Now I would like to center in on the third one, the Law. We all know that for any organization to function, it must have rules and regulations. It must have authority vested in someone. As I look back on my past, I find there has always been authority, rules, and regulations at work in my life. This is true of your life, also. It was necessary; it helped you to grow and develop.

Then suddenly we discover in Scripture that we're released from the letter of the Law, the Laws written in stone. We are told that Christ fulfilled this, by nailing it on the cross, and thereby He set us free. Does this mean that we no longer have any Law? If that were the case, we would be a lawless people, and we know that the Kingdom of God has order and authority. No, it doesn't mean that we are without Law. It means the Law is written in a new place, on the tablets of our hearts.

The Bible tells us we are transferred from the dominion of darkness, into the dominion of light. We have been living totally at the level of the flesh; now we are living on a spiritual plane. In the past we had the tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments. Now we have the Spirit and letters written in our hearts.

From now on, you and I need to function as spiritual men and women, not as "men of the flesh." Now we need to walk as men in the dominion of light, not as men in darkness. Now we need to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying in our hearts, not worrying about what the tablets of stone say. Let the old pass away and let the new come with the knowledge of Jesus.

The babies, the carnal, the fleshy, the children of the Kingdom of God, function at a different level than the mature sons do. They function under a set of laws, rules, and regulations. They have to, because they have not yet learned to listen and to be obedient to the Holy Spirit's voice within.

(Galatians 3:21-25)--"Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on the law."

(verse 22) "But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

(verse 23) "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed."

(verse 24) "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

(verse 25) "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

Look back at those scriptures and see what is the tutor. The tutor is the Law. What is the purpose of a tutor? To teach us, to direct our lives, to help us get ready for maturity. What happens when we come of age, when we go out on our own? No more tutors! Being led by the Spirit means the Law is not the tutor any longer, because we have come of age.

Paul deals with this subject more fully in Colossians 2:16, 20-21
"Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink, or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day..."

(verse 20) "If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees?"

(verse 21) "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"

What was Paul trying to tell us? I think it is this: When we reach maturity, we shouldn't need someone telling us what to do, say, think, or act every time we turn around. We should be old enough to determine that for ourselves. I should be able to decide whether I should be at this church service or that service -- or where the Spirit would have me be today -- or what I should say and do.

Maybe our church system needs a graduation day, so some of us could become the teachers, instead of those being taught.

The Jews have a special service, a Bar Mitzvah, when they recognize their boys have become men; when they have reached maturity and are not children any longer.

If Paul were with us today, I think he would say to many of us that have been in the church for years the same things he said to the Hebrews.

"For the time you ought to be teachers you have need to be taught all over again, how to be lead by the Holy Spirit."

We know our church doctrine. We know our traditions and rituals. We know to pray each day and study the Bible regularly. We don't know how to be led by God the Holy Spirit.

Lord, bring us quickly to the place of being mature persons led by your Holy Spirit. Amen.

RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD

You might ask the question, "What does right standing with God have to do with being led by the Spirit?" Plenty. We need to have a confident assurance of our right standing with God, otherwise we can't be sure He will even talk to us. Our right standing with God does not have to do with the Law or the keeping of the Law. Our right standing with God has to do with our faith.

This is the number one problem and the most misunderstood part of the whole New Testament. Our right standing with God pertains to what Jesus did -- not what we have done. We have right standing with God, because Jesus fulfilled the Law for us. We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all. The word "sanctified" means: "To make holy, to consecrate, to purify, to free from sin." That is what Jesus did for us. He gave us right standing with God. We do not earn it!

One of the parables that shows this truth most clearly is Luke 18: 10-14, in which Jesus said that two men went into the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax-gatherer. (verses 11-13) "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer... I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me, the sinner!'"

Listen to what Jesus said in verse 14: "I tell you, this man (the tax-gatherer) went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

This parable imparts a certain truth about approaching God. What do the Pharisee and the publican, or tax-gatherer represent? The Pharisee represents the keeper of the Law; he does everything just right. He has earned his way; yet he is still not justified. He still does not have a right standing with God.

The tax-gatherer, on the other hand, knows himself to be the chief of sinners, the one who does not do anything right. He stands at a distance and only cries out for God's mercy, yet it is he who goes away justified, in right standing with God.

What is this parable showing us? That if you want justification, right standing with God, you will have to go before God as a sinner and receive it as a gift. You cannot go before the

Lord as a keeper of the Law, presenting all the good you have done, and expect to walk away justified and right with God.

Paul expressed it this way (Philippians 3:9) "...that I may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith."

How long is it going to take us to realize that our own righteousness is not enough--and that is all that can come from the Law, our own righteousness. May God give us understanding of the following scripture. (Romans 9:30-31)--

(verse 30) "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith."

(verse 31) "But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law."

(verse 32) "Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumble over the stumbling stone."

Are any of us making the same mistake today? Are we stumbling over the stumbling stone also? Are we pursuing right standing with God by our good works and our keeping of the Law? Or are we pursuing right standing with God by faith?

This important question needs to be settled in our hearts. Are we going to trust in obeying the Law to perfect us, or are we going to put our whole trust in Jesus Christ?

(Romans 3:20)--"... Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

(Romans 4:13)--"For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith."

(Acts 13:39)--"...and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."

(Galatians 2:16)--"... Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but through faith in Christ... and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."

We find that our right standing with God rests solely on what Jesus Christ did. While He hung on the cross, He cried, "It is done!" He had accomplished what His Father had sent Him to do. Jesus alone brought us into right standing with God. He paid the price for my sin. He put to death my old nature. He fulfilled the Law for me, and took it out of the way.

If I am not justified, if I do not have right standing with God through what Jesus did for me, then there is no hope for me at all of ever entering the Kingdom of God, and having right standing with my Father. But do I believe that I have right standing because

of what Jesus has done -- for all of us -- you and me? Yes, I believe.

MISLED BY MY SPIRIT

Can I be misled by my own spirit? Yes! Can I be led by my own spirit apart from the Holy Spirit? Yes. This may be hard for some to understand, if you don't know how to recognize the difference between the soul, the spirit, and the Holy Spirit. I know that it is of vital importance for all who want to be led by the Spirit to understand this truth. I can be led by my spirit and still not be in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Can the soul of man sin against God? I am sure we all agree that it can. Can the spirit of man sin against God? It certainly can and does.

We know that our soul can be prideful; it can be arrogant, domineering, controlling, and many other things. These are all sinful.

The spirit of man can have the same problem. Your spirit and my spirit can become very aggressive, filled with pride, domineering, controlling, belligerent, and demanding.

What if this happens to a person who is in the place of leadership? Should we subject our selves to this type of person? No! You would be wise to back off in a hurry.

We have all become experts, through the years, in using other people. We use everything at our disposal to get done what we want done. From the time we are little children, we learn how to play the game. Look how well many children control their parents through fear, tears, anger, embarrassment, and many other devices. Do we still use these things as adults? I don't have to answer that one, I am sure.

What does all this have to do with being led by the Spirit? Plenty! We can very easily become spiritual and still use the same methods to manipulate people in the church. Many religious groups have been misled by such people who were very spiritual, but not led by the Holy Spirit.

Some people have natural ability to lead, so when they have a conversion, or are "born again," they quickly take leadership positions, and the others who don't have that ability allow them to do it. It doesn't matter if these persons really know the leading of the Holy Spirit or not, or if God is calling them to a position of authority; they just naturally assume it.

In our travels we have been to many groups where the wrong people were leading. It is strange how the Holy Spirit will pick people to lead who seem to have no leadership ability, no speaking ability, no controlling ability. I believe that the Holy Spirit very seldom picks people who want to lead. Over and over, we have seen Him pick someone to lead the group who does not want to lead, who does not want to control.

That is the kind of leader I want and you should want too -- one who does not want to control, but leads only because the Holy Spirit wants him to.

One of the dangers of a controlling person in the spiritual realm is that he or she will say, "God told me to tell you to do this or that. Let me tell you, I have learned to watch out for that sort of thing for this reason: I think I can hear from God as well as anyone else. I know that God often uses another person to confirm something He has already told me, but if the Lord has not first spoken to me about it, I don't worry too much about someone else's message.

I have learned also to be wary when somebody claims to have all the answers. Don't trust them very far; don't pay too much heed to their answers, for most of them are wrong for you.

Another area where you must be careful is the gift of prophecy. Many prophecies are not from God. The Bible records many instances of false or lying prophets when the message came from their own spirit.

This happens today also when our spirit becomes prideful and controlling. Do you think there might be Christian people out there who would like to control you? Do you suppose that they might use a word of prophecy to do that? They can, and do. Most of them are not even aware that the prophecy they are speaking is not from God, but from their own spirit for the purpose of controlling others. They would be the first to deny any such charge.

The Bible tells us that the test of a prophet is that it must come to pass, and if it doesn't, it is not from God.

Don't worry if someone prophesies over you. Just test it carefully, especially if it is regarding direction for your life. Don't be hasty about believing every prophecy you hear. Listen to it; store it away; don't be anxious about it.

Don't be too quick to call someone a false prophet, however, even if he or she makes a mistake. We all do. Sometimes our own spirit misleads us, so keep your eyes on Jesus. The Holy Spirit will be faithful in leading us into the truth and into the light.

IMAGINATION OR CONFIRMATION

The Bible tells us to be careful not to be cast about by every wind of doctrine. I don't think it's necessarily a wrong doctrine; we just get in a rut with a few doctrines and methods and carry them to extremes.

Man is very imaginative. He can see things in words and actions and circumstances that are not even there. We all grow up reading between the lines. We say one thing, but we mean another. We function in a double meaning system.

Because of this, we are never quite sure just what a person is really thinking or truly means. Many times our imagination runs away with it self. For example, a person might say, "My boss doesn't like me." That probably is not the truth at all.

A teenager might say, "My parents don't love me." That is not the truth either. A wife might think, "My husband must have a girl friend, because he comes home late every night." Yet, he may be working every night trying to support her and buy things to please her.

All I am saying is you can't trust your imagination or what you think your imagination is telling you, because it can hear what it wants to hear, and see things in action that are not even there. Yet many Christian people use this type of system for their spiritual guidance.

I tell you, we can read just about anything we want into circumstances. It is not a very trustworthy guide, because we are too imaginative.

We have seen and known people who have made some very costly mistakes using this method.

So often we hear people say, "I put out a fleece." What is a fleece? I know that it is taken from the Bible; and Gideon, whom God had spoken to, wanted to test His word, so he put out a fleece and said to God, "If there is dew on the fleece while the ground all around is dry, then I will know the word is from You." It happened! But Gideon still wasn't sure, so he said again, "Now let there be dew on the ground, and none on the fleece." That also happened.

One of the things I see in these scriptures is that God had already spoken clearly to this man. Next, it was not just circumstances that happened, allowing him to make anything he wanted of it. What happened each time was a miracle. Gideon did not ask for a circumstance. He asked for a miracle each time, a supernatural act beyond our natural laws.

Something else we must note is that putting out the fleece was not practiced over and over again. Many other men and women walked with the Spirit, and they did not use this method.

(Mark 16:20) "And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed."

I remember in the earlier part of my Christian walk that the Holy Spirit would tell me some thing to do, and then He would confirm it in the next few days. Then I would go ahead and do it. But then that stopped. The Holy Spirit would tell me what to do, and I would wait and nothing would happen. I would pray, "Lord give me confirmation," but none would come.

Then He spoke to me one day and said, "I am not going to give you confirmation until after you have done what I ask." Then He explained, "I want you to move by faith, not by confirmation."

I wonder how much confirmation Abraham had before he went forth from his home and friends? I wonder how much confirmation Noah had before he started to build the ark? I think Noah's confirmation was the flood; Abraham's confirmation was a great nation.

God's confirmation to the disciples were the signs and wonders after they went out and preached the word.

What is the big mistake we make in this doctrine of God confirming things? We think God is going to tell us what to do. Then we think He is going to confirm it. Then we'll go out and do it. That is not the way it is. God tells us what to do; we go and do it, and then God confirms that it was from Him.

I have had the experience of a voice telling me, "There is going to be a stranger at the meeting tonight; you can trust him; he will not let you down."

There was a stranger that night, and I did trust him, but I was let down and deceived. Just because this voice told me a stranger was coming, and he appeared as predicted, I did not test it, or question the stranger. As a result, the stranger ended up dividing one of our groups and messing up several people real bad.

Brothers and sisters, if you receive what seems to be very clear confirmation about something, don't be too gullible. Test it very carefully. The Bible says we shall know them by their fruit. I said by their fruit, not by their gifts, or by their talents. So many get taken in by gifted, talented people, because we don't look for the fruit of their talents. Do they bring peace and love, or disharmony and confusion?

Not every gifted, talented person is led by the Spirit.

Don't be quick to run here and there, but listen carefully to the Holy Spirit. Most of us are swayed quite easily. Our imaginations

can be stirred up very easily. You know the old saying, "The grass is greener on the other side of the fence."

Christian people get caught up in this too. Some of the things that can stir the imagination are things like this: "We really praise God over in our church." "We have a real freedom in our church." "Our church is the best in town." "Our pastor preaches better than anyone else around." "If you really want to see power, come to our church." "Only Jesus is lifted up over here." "We have the real truth!" Or you might hear: "The Holy Spirit is in our church." "The gifts are manifested in our church." "We really love one another in our church."

You will find that most of these statements have a negative connotation which works on our imagination. Not only do we see that the other churches might have something special, but that our own is lacking. The other field is greener, and ours is browner and more dried up.

Not that there might not be some truth to these things; there probably is, but if we act on these suggestions and move into the other field, we are not being led by the Holy Spirit. We are being very subtly controlled by someone else. If you want to be led by the Holy Spirit, don't let others play their control games with you; be aware of them. Most people don't try to manipulate on purpose; they do it without realizing it.

My wife and I have had so many people try to persuade us to go here, go there, do this, or do that. Their argument is, "Why do you stay in a church like that? How can you be a Christian and go to that church?"

I have found an important truth. It doesn't matter if I am in the "green" field or the "brown" field. It doesn't matter if I am where they are speaking in tongues or not. It is important that I love Him. It doesn't matter if it is the greatest praising church. It matters that my heart is praising. It doesn't matter that your church or mine has

"all the truth." It does matter that we know Jesus and love one another.

What does it all come down to? I think this: That you and I need to be where the Holy Spirit wants us to be, doing what He wants us to be doing. It doesn't matter where you want me to be, or where I want you to be. All that matters is where He wants us to be.

Our imagination works both ways, for ourselves and for others. I can imagine where God wants you, but it may not be where He really wants you. I must be careful that my imagination doesn't control me, and that it isn't allowed to control you either...

For example, some people imagine that God wants all Spirit-filled people to go to the same church in the same area. I think that is imagination and not God's will at all.

Some imagine that we should all live in a community together. I don't think that is God's will at all. Some imagine that we should all be Baptist, others imagine we should all be Catholic, yet others imagine we should all be Pentecostal. I don't think that is God's will at all. That is all imagination.

I do believe that we should encourage one another to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, and to look to the Holy Spirit to lead us to encourage one another.

There is another saying that I hear often, which goes something like this, "Blossom in the field where you were planted." That is no more the leading of the Spirit than all the other things of which I spoke. It is not scriptural! We are not planted; we are "born again," spiritual people and we are to be led by the Holy Spirit into new paths, green fields, by streams of living water, quiet places of rest, mountain tops, and deep valleys.

Lord, help us to be led by your Spirit, and deliver us from being controlled by people -- or being the controller of others.

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS

When we use the statement, "Led by the Spirit," we are implying something that many people do not want to face -- that there are other beings around; we are not alone.

Through the ages, in every culture, we find myths, fables, stories of beings that were not human, like ourselves. We quickly write this off, assuming these other people were ignorant and were not enlightened like ourselves. We rationalize that they didn't know any better than to believe stuff like that. I am not saying those stories were all true, but there was a truth in them. Many of those people lived in dreadful fear of unknown beings. Maybe they had good reason to be afraid. They most certainly had the truth that these beings did exist, and that they were here on this planet, and could manifest themselves in a variety of ways.

In many of the old myths, it speaks about gods having relations with humans, and the children they had were very special, gifted and strong. To my amazement, when I read the Bible, I see that things very much like that happened.

(Genesis 6:1-4)--"Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them,"

(verse 2) "That the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose."

(verse 3) "Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

(verse 4) "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown."

I have met people who believe there is no devil. I believe there is, because the Bible makes it very clear there is. He was the most beautiful of angels; he was close to God, and he tried to take His place. There was a war in heaven. Somehow he managed to get a third of the angels in heaven to join his side. They were defeated by God and cast down to the earth. Once they were filled with light, but now they are filled with darkness. It speaks of this in Revelations 12:7-9 "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels waged war with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels waged war."

(verse 8) "...and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven."

(verse 9) "...the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."

Mankind is not alone on this earth. There are other beings of which we are unaware. Some of them are very deadly. They are, in fact, waging war with us and want to destroy us, while we try to ignore the fact that they exist. The Scriptures make us aware that the only way we can keep from being deceived by these beings is by the protection of the Holy Spirit.

Two of their weapons are ignorance and fear -- ignorance of their presence among us, and fear of them if we are aware of their presence.

We need to learn from past generations and accept the fact, the truth, that there are other beings besides us on this planet. Next, don't cringe in fear of these beings, no matter how deceitful, ugly,

or fearful they may seem. We must take up the mantle of authority that God has given us through Jesus Christ, and stand firm, not giving them an inch.

I am aware that after becoming Christian, we need to clean up our houses. I mean this both ways: The temple of the body and the very house we and our family live in. There is no doubt about it; there are certain things that are an abomination to God.

If we are involved in spiritualism, divination, or any of the occult practices--anything to do with witchcraft--we are to get these things out of our lives right away. No matter what form of worship was practiced before, begin to worship only God, the one true God, manifested through the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

If you have objects in your house that are an abomination to God, get rid of them. You don't have to be afraid of them; even if you see them in another person's house, you don't have to be alarmed about it or make a scene over it.

There may be a question in your mind: "What am I to get rid of if I want to clean up my house?" I don't know. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you those things in your house that should be removed. If it is something that belongs to another, then explain what you are doing and why you want it out of your house, and why it is displeasing to God. Your children may not understand what you are doing. Tell them; use this chance to teach them. Don't fill their hearts with fear of every little object, or give them the impression that those things have a special power; they do not.

Don't let someone else tell you what you should keep or throw away, just be SENSITIVE to the Holy Spirit. It will be a good LESSON in learning to know the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Again I warn you, the enemy uses fear, he will try to make you fearful of every object; that is nothing less than SUPERSTITION. Don't allow fear of any object to enter your heart, no matter what the object has been used for.

Are ghosts for real? I believe they are. I am not afraid of them; they are a spirit manifestation. If they are dealt with properly by the authority that God gives us as individuals, or by the body of Christ, they cease their activity. Some spirit manifestations can move objects around; some can make sounds; some can be seen by a few people. I don't know why there is such fear about these things. All we need to be is knowledgeable.

Many of these things, or beings, are FAMILIAR spirits. What they often do is appear as a person who has died. Remember, a spirit does not die -- or as far as I know they don't -- so they have been around for a long time.

Say, for example, that a FAMILIAR spirit has been around your house all your life. You have never been aware of it, but it has been there. You die. All of a sudden, people begin to see this supernatural APPARITION of you. Is it really you? More than likely not. It is probably the FAMILIAR spirit that is copying you. That FAMILIAR spirit knew you quite well, you know; it was around all your life, knew all your habits, the way you dressed, the way you spoke.

Don't fall into the mistake of letting one of these beings direct your life. Some people do. Their loved one dies and they begin to see him or her, or what they think is that person, as a spirit. They become more and more reliant on this thing, until it has control of their lives. Again you might ask, what does all this have to do with being led by the Spirit? Simply this: We must be knowledgeable in all these matters of the spiritual realm. I am not trying to say I know it all. I don't, but what I do know of these things, I want to share with others who don't know.

Do you know that some people are very aware of the spiritual realm and take advantage of it and use it for their own ends? Do you know that some of these spiritual beings will work with you?

Say, for example, that I have a spirit working with me; I can talk to that spirit; he can speak to me. Now I want to impress you so I tell

you to go into the other room and hide something there. I walk into the room and go right to the object and find it. What has happened? The spirit saw where you hid the object, told me, and I went and picked it up. Simple, isn't it? These things do happen; sometimes right on our TV screens and most people are totally unaware.

Séances, are they for real? Some of them are, when a very real spirit enters. Is it the spirit of the dead person? I don't think so. I believe it is a FAMILIAR spirit, a deceiving spirit, a spiritual being that lives on this earth.

One other thing I would like to cover just lightly, is reincarnation. Some people seem to recall a past life. Sometimes when people are hypnotized, a different personality comes forth, or several personalities appear.

The Bible tells us we have one time to live, once to die, and once to be judged.

Why then do people believe in reincarnation?

What is happening to these people? Any time someone is in a trance, it seems to allow a real freedom for other spirits to move through them. I believe what happens is this: When the person goes into a trance or is hypnotized, the FAMILIAR spirit can then speak through that person very easily. The FAMILIAR spirit has been around for a long time. It knows many people from the past, their habits, their dress, their language, and personal things about them.

The FAMILIAR spirit takes advantage of this opportunity and tells all these things. Bystanders may check them out and find that they were true. Result, reincarnation! Not really, it's a deceiving spirit that has taken in many people who want to believe in reincarnation.

Again, we don't have to be afraid of these things, but we must be aware of them.

Guard your heart and mind. Don't allow others to tamper with either. Don't allow your mind to be passive, or hypnotized. Most of the people involved in this type of thing are not Christian. Many of them are not even aware that danger exists when one encourages the spirit world.

There are beings on this planet that have the capability of thought and planning. They are spirits, demons, ghosts, devils, whatever you want to label them. God has not left us alone with these things. He has also given us the good spirits, the angels, to help us and to watch over us. The Bible calls them the "ministering spirits." We don't have to be afraid of those fallen things, because we are on the winning side. Be aware of them, however, and don't give them any opportunity in your life or your home.

INTERPRETATION

The word "interpret" means: "to explain the meaning of, to act as an interpreter." It also means, "to understand according to individual belief."

Of course, wherever interpretation is needed there must be an interpreter. I am sure that many of us are trying to communicate with the Kingdom of God, in fact with the person of God, Himself. He is Spirit. We are born of the Spirit, but still of the flesh, with little understanding of spiritual things. From the Scriptures we see there is more than one kind of understanding. There is an intellectual understanding and a heart understanding. Many times we hear the saying, "It finally got from my head to my heart." Anyone who says this means they had an intellectual understanding of God, of salvation, of the cross, of Jesus, and of the Bible. Then one day it became heart understanding, and took on a deeper and different meaning than it ever had before.

I could read a certain part of the Bible, and then paraphrase what it means to me. You could read the same passage as I and tell me what it was saying to you. More than likely we would disagree because of our backgrounds and because we don't all understand a word in the same way. The same word can mean something different to each person who reads that passage. But we would still be interpreting scripture to one another, even though our interpretation differed according to our understanding of the words.

Then how are we ever going to come to a common understanding of the Scripture? Maybe we Won't!

Now again, we could pray and ask the Holy Spirit to interpret the Word for us--read the same passages---listen in our hearts, and

possibly receive a totally different message than either one of us had intellectualized the first time. The difference in this case would be because it was not your interpretation, or mine, but the Holy Spirit's interpretation -- which could very well be much, much different than ours.

Interpretation is very important. I pray that it will not be misunderstood. I don't believe there is only one interpretation of the Bible, but many. I have found that the same Scripture has ministered to me many times, always with a different meaning and in different circumstances.

In the organized church, there are certain things that are interpreted by that body, certain basic truths that are accepted and that we all embrace as truth from God and from His Word, and I am not questioning these things. What I am saying is -- there is more than this!

I remember when I was filled with the Holy Spirit and the Bible came alive to me. I used to sit and read it for hours. It took on a whole new meaning for me. I had planned to get a commentary to read along with the Bible, but the Holy Spirit very clearly made me aware that I was not to do this. At the time, I didn't understand why. Now I know. It was because the Holy Spirit didn't want me to get my mind set on what others thought the Bible meant. It wasn't that they were in error necessarily -- but the Lord wanted my mind open. After I read through the Bible for the first time, I read some of the commentaries. Then they weren't able to influence my thinking, and only helped amplify and expand what I already understood.

If we are to be led by the Holy Spirit our hearts must always listen to the interpreter, the Holy Spirit. He is the one that interprets the "Living Word" into our hearts, direct from our Father in Heaven, whether He chooses to use the Bible, or some person, or speak to us directly Himself -- it is the heart that must be listening.

When people come up and speak to me after I have given a talk, I can tell right away if they heard with their hearts, or their intellect. The heart receives a totally different understanding than the mind. I pray that you have learned to listen with the heart. That's where the Word of God penetrates.

The Scripture says, "Not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

The Word received into a man's heart is like a life-giving loaf of bread to him. The Word received by the intellect makes him a little bit more knowledgeable.

So, we end up with several interpretations, in many different ways. Do you know that it is important that we receive them all, not just one, but all. You see, I am not saying this one is right and that one is wrong. I believe that we need them all, and that is the way God intended it to be.

We can listen to the Church's theological approach and say, "Yes. That is good. I agree." We can talk to one another and express what we feel about the Scriptures, and what we understand they are saying to us as individuals.

We can, and should, listen to our hearts, as moment by moment the Holy Spirit interprets the "Living Word" in order to help us in every situation.

We should be listening with our intellect also, and receiving that interpretation which makes us knowledgeable in our minds about the things of God.

God's Word is living and active; and because of that, the interpretation must also be living and active. Don't let it become stale and dead.

Because the Church is a living organism, not just an organization, change should be taking place constantly, even as it is in our daily

lives. Traditions change; ways of doing things change; rituals change. A part of my life is ritual and tradition, and I would be willing to bet, part of your life is too. Because ritual and tradition are part of our lives, it is essential that ritual and tradition be a part of our church life also. Don't try to reject it. Learn how to flow with it and to enjoy and enter into it.

The rituals and traditions are an interpretation themselves of our Christian heritage.

I remember my Dad saying certain things in a certain way. I find that sometimes I say the same things, in the same way. It reminds me of him and I feel good. Other times, I find that I do things the same that my Dad did them. I find that reminds me of him too, and I take pleasure in that. Little treasures, little rituals and traditions bring me great joy, because I not only share it with those who are with me today, but it reminds me of past generations.

Don't be afraid of change. Don't be afraid of tradition. Keep an open heart. Keep an open mind. Listen to the church; listen to your brothers and sisters in Christ; listen to your heart. Let the Holy Spirit bring refreshing, interpretations, moment by moment into your life.

All too often, well-intentioned people have filled us with a fear that somehow we might receive the wrong interpretation. I pray that any who have this fear will be delivered from it right now, in the Name above all names, JESUS CHRIST. Don't be afraid of interpretations. Listen to your heart, your mind, the Holy Spirit; each provides a part of the whole message from God.

WHO WILL GO? WHOM WILL I SEND?

"Who will go? Whom will I send?" Isaiah 6:8--I have heard this Scripture many times. The first time I read it in the Old Testament...later I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go?"

Then I said, "Here I am; send me."

From that time on, I have heard it in my heart many times. Every time I hear it, I have mixed feelings. There is a feeling of excitement and anticipation, yet at the same time, a little fear and dread. I feel this way, because I know that the Lord has some new thing for me to do, and I never feel quite capable to do it. I never know what the Lord wants me to do next, until after I say "Send me Lord; I will go." The one thing I was always sure of was whatever the Lord asked me to do, He would give me every thing I needed to do it.

For a long time, I really wanted to be in the ministry on a full time basis; but to tell you the truth, I did not really expect it to happen. I was not qualified. I had no other means of support except my electrical business.

A strange thing happened when Pauline and I were baptized in the Holy Spirit. We did not share this with each other for a long time afterwards. Then one day I was telling her that I knew from the moment we were baptized in the Spirit that God had a full time ministry for us. She said, "I know it too, and have known it from the time I received the fullness of the Spirit."

I have also noticed that the Holy Spirit does not begin to make a way for us until we have said, "Yes, I will go." Then things begin to happen.

I am sure that the Holy Spirit is saying to many of you, "Who will go? Whom will I send?" You don't have to be great or know it all to be able to hear the Lord and to say, "Yes, Lord, I hear you. Send me, I will go."

(1 Corinthians 1:26)--"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many noble;"

(verse 27) "...But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong."

(verse 28) "...and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are."

(verse 29) "...that no man should boast before God."

(verse 30) "...But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

(verse 31) "...that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."

I can truly say that the Lord has done great things for us, through us, and in us. We have now been involved in active ministry of one kind or another for about fourteen years. The Lord has not led us astray, and I don't believe He ever will. He has caused our work to be fruitful. He has used us to accomplish His purposes in many ways, so again I say, "The Lord has done great things!"

I know that He can and will do great things for all of us, through all of us, and in all of us. All we have to be is willing to be used.

(John 10:9)--"I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and go in and out and find pasture."

(John 10:11)--"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

(John 10:14)--"I am the good shepherd and I know My own, and My own know Me."

THE BEGINNING

I am sure for some who read this book, it will seem like old stuff to you; yet to others it will be very new. Some might ask, "How do I make it work in my life?"

For those who ask, "How does it work? How do I hear God speak to me?" For those who are very new to this kind of leading and want it, all I can say is, reach out to God, ask Him with your whole heart, your whole mind, with all your strength, crying, "God let it happen to me! I want to be led by your Spirit! I want to know your voice in my heart!"

I really can't give you any methods. I can only tell you this: Go before God as a child, wanting to be taught. If there is a method that I use, it is this: I reach out to God from inside and say, "God, I want to please you and do your will! I am willing to be used, but, Lord, I don't know what to do unless you tell me... I don't know what to say, unless you tell me. You are going to have to speak clearly enough so that I can understand, so that I can hear you. Do that Lord; speak in a simple, clear way that I can understand. Lord, do it quickly. Thank you."

If there are some of you who have never received Jesus Christ into your heart and life, pray with me, "Jesus, I want you to come into my heart and into my family. Lord, grant me faith to believe that you are with me, and that you are never going to leave me. I am a sinner who needs your help. Forgive me and set me free from the bondage of my sin and death. I want to live--not die. I want to be with you, Lord. Be my shepherd. Thank you Lord. Amen."