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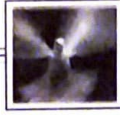
How You Can Be Led by the

Spirit of God



LEGACY EDITION

Expanded With New Material



CHAPTER 19

Number Three: The Voice of the Holy Spirit

*While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him,
Behold, three men seek thee.*

—Acts 10:19

God leads us by what we call the still small voice. But He also leads us by the voice of the Spirit of God speaking to us. This is the third way we are led by the Spirit. Number one is by the inward witness. Number two is by the inward still small voice. Number three is by the more authoritative voice of the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference between the inward voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to our spirits, and that still small voice which is the voice of our own spirit speaking to us. When the Holy Spirit within you speaks, it is more authoritative.

Sometimes it is so real it almost seems to be an audible voice; you may even look around to see who said it. It may seem so audible sometimes that you may think someone behind you said something. But then you realize it was *in* you.

Remember in the Old Testament how the young boy Samuel heard a voice call his name, “Samuel, Samuel?” He thought Eli was calling him. He jumped up and ran to Eli to find out what he wanted. Eli said, “No, I didn’t call you.” Samuel went back to bed. Then again he heard, “Samuel, Samuel.” Again he ran to Eli. “No, I didn’t call you.” It happened the third time. Finally, it dawned on Eli what was happening. Eli said, “The next time the Lord calls you, answer Him.” So the next time it happened, Samuel answered that voice, and the Lord spoke further to him (1 Sam. Chapter 3).

All of God’s leadings are supernatural; some, however, are not so spectacular. But I have found in more than 50 years of ministry that when God moved in a more spectacular way—when He has spoken to me in what seemed to me to be an audible voice—it meant there was rough sailing ahead. If He had not spoken so spectacularly I would not have stayed steady.

Concerning the last church I pastored, for example, I heard the pastorate was open and I made arrangements to preach there one Wednesday night. During the period of time before I was to go there to preach, I held a three-week revival in Houston. During this revival, the pastor, his brother (who was also a preacher), and I met at the church every day to pray about the night services. The church with the open pastorate was their home church. Every day the pastor and his brother would ask me, “Have you prayed about that church yet?”

Finally, I did pray about it. I just said to the Lord, “I’m going up to that church next Monday and I’m going to preach Wednesday. I don’t know whether You want me to pastor there or not. I don’t know if I even want to pastor it. But whatever You say about it is fine with me.”

That is all I said. Then I heard a voice speak so plainly, I jumped. I looked behind me. I really thought that one of the preachers had heard me pray and was joking with me, because I heard this voice, and to me it was audible. The voice said, “You are the next pastor at that church, and that will be the last church you will ever pastor.”

(You could interpret that a thousand different ways! You could let the devil tell you that you were going to die, or that you were going to be defeated. But it actually meant that my ministry would change to a field ministry.)

About then those two preachers walked down the aisle. As usual, they asked, “Have you prayed about that church yet?”

I said, “You two fellows are looking at the next pastor.”

“Oooh, if you knew that church like we know it, you wouldn’t say that. It’s split right down the middle. Anything half the church is for, the other half is against. It takes two-thirds of the vote to get elected as pastor, and we’ll just be honest with you, you won’t be able to get elected.”

“I don’t know about that. I just know I’m the next pastor.”

“Well, you don’t know that church like we do.”

I said, “No, but I know Jesus. And I know the Spirit of God. I know what He said to me.”

After I preached the first time, I saw why God moved in such a spectacular way. Every word I spoke bounced right back to me like a rubber ball bouncing off the back wall. It was tough.

I thought I was only going to preach one night, but they had made arrangements for me to preach several nights. Each night my wife and children and I had to move to a different place to stay. We were at one deacon's house one night, and another deacon's house the next night.

One deacon told us, "If you stayed with me all the time, some of the rest of the congregation would probably get jealous and think I'm for you and they would vote against you."

We kept all our things in the car, and every night we would get out just enough for the next day. And every night when we got off to bed, I would say to my wife, "If God hadn't spoken so spectacularly to me, I would just get up, get the children, get into the car, and leave without saying a word to anyone."

My flesh wanted to leave so badly. My mind wanted to leave. My spirit held me steady because God had spoken to me in such a spectacular way.

They had the election. I got every vote. Everyone said, "It's the greatest miracle of the century—that anyone could get that kind of vote from this church."

I knew all the time I would get it. The Spirit of God had told me I would.