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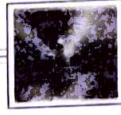
How You Can Be Led by the

Spirit of God



LEGACY EDITION

Expanded With New Material



CHAPTER 9

Fleeced!

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:
and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you
an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you. . . .*

—Ezekiel 36:26–27

In 1941 I didn't know as much as I know now. Please don't misunderstand me; I don't know as much now as I am going to know. I would hate to think I know all I am ever going to know in this life about God and about the Bible. No, we don't know everything, but praise God for what we do know.

Anyway, in 1941 my wife and I were pastors of a church in the blackland of North Central Texas. Another church down in the oil field of East Texas wanted me to come and try out as pastor. So I drove down and preached one Sunday. The church asked if they could vote

on me for pastor, and I said yes. Traveling back home after the service, I put out a fleece.

Now I was born and raised Southern Baptist. I started preaching as a Southern Baptist. In 1937 I was baptized in the Holy Spirit as a Baptist preacher. In 1939 I accepted the pastorate of a little Full Gospel Church. It was in March 1941 that this church in East Texas wanted to consider me as pastor. I had been with Full Gospel people long enough by that time that some of their misconceptions had rubbed off on me. Don't misunderstand me; a lot of good things rubbed off on me too. But this one was bad. I kept hearing them talk about putting out fleeces. So I put out a fleece.

I really knew better. But at the time it seemed as if it would save me a lot of the trouble of praying, and getting alone and waiting on God, and maybe some fasting—just to put out a fleece.

In putting out a fleece, one prays something like this: "Lord, if you want me to do this—then You do that." Or, "God, if you want me to do this, then have that happen." Or, "Lord, shut that door, and open this door."

Some of those doors the devil might shut, and some of them the devil might open. They are in his territory. The Bible calls him the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). That would be like praying, "Lord, if you want me to go to Kansas City next week, You open Brother Hagin's front door." I might open it myself. I live there. You see, Satan can move in the sense realm.

God has a better way of leading His children than by a hit-and-miss method such as fleeces. The New Testament does not say, "As many as are led by fleeces, they are the children of God."

"Yes," someone might say, "but Gideon put out a fleece back in the Old Testament."

Why go back under the Old Covenant? We have something better. The Old Covenant is for spiritually dead people. I am not spiritually dead. I am alive! I have the Spirit of God in me.

Remember Gideon was not a prophet, a priest, or a king. Only those three offices, under the Old Covenant, were anointed by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God was not personally present with the rest of the people.

That's why every male had to present himself at the temple in Jerusalem once a year. The Shekinah glory—the Presence of God—was kept shut up in the Holy of Holies. But when Jesus died on Calvary, the curtain that curtained off the Holy of Holies was rent (torn) in twain from top to bottom—and God moved out. He has never dwelled in earth-made houses since. He dwells in us!

It is dangerous for New Testament, Spirit-filled Christians to put out fleeces. I know that from the Word. And I know it from experience.

Back there in 1941 I said as I drove along, "Lord, I am going to put out a fleece. I am just going to turn it over to You. (I didn't realize that I wasn't turning it over to the Lord.) If they elect me as pastor 100 percent, I am going to accept that as being the will of God, and I am going to accept that church."

I got every vote! That was my fleece. They elected me 100 percent. They missed God. I missed God. They got fleeced. I got fleeced. I got out of the perfect will of God—and God just let me do it.

We moved into the parsonage. Many things were more comfortable than what we'd had before, from the natural standpoint. We had more money. We lived in a better parsonage. We drove a better automobile.

But I would study and pray and get a message—and be just all on fire. Then the minute I stepped inside the church door, it was as

though somebody poured a bucket of cold water on me. I lost it all. In fourteen months I didn't preach a decent sermon. No inspiration.

My wife was reluctant to say anything. She finally did say, "Honey, you've got to where you can make a pretty good talk."

That was all I was doing, making "talks." I wasn't preaching. When my agreed-upon time was up, I left. I didn't wait for some signal to leave; I just left.

Later on in pastoring, I always wanted to go back there for a meeting because I wanted those people to know I could preach. They had never really heard me *preach*. Finally, in the course of time, I went back and held a revival. Folks' mouths fell open. "We didn't know you could preach like that," they said.

I said, "Oh, yes, I preached like that before I came here to pastor, and I preached like that after I left here."

"Well, you didn't preach like that when you were here." I said, "No, because we were all out of the will of God. I was here out of the will of God, and you elected me out of the will of God."

I learned about that fleece business. One time ought to cure a fellow. But some folks—even though none of their fleeces have ever worked—still put out fleeces.

I never missed it again in going to any other church as pastor. And I didn't put out any more fleeces. I prayed and waited on God. I talked to God long enough so that I knew right on the inside what I was to do.