Receiving
GOD'S GUIDANCE



ASHISH RAICHUR

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Receiving

GOD'S GUIDANCE

Dedication

To the generations
that come after us

"As for Me," says the Lord,
"this is My covenant with them:
My Spirit who is upon you, and
My words which I have put in your mouth,
shall not depart from your mouth,
nor from the mouth of your descendants,
nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants,"
says the Lord, "from this time and forevermore"
(Isaiah 59:21).

May you experience more of Him than we have.
May His speaking, leading, directing and guiding be normal and natural to you.
May you be people after God's own heart, fulfilling all the will of God in your day.

Contents

Introduction

1. God, Our Guide 1
2. David Inquired of God 16
3. The Word 25
4. The Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit 36
5. The Voice of the Holy Spirit 60
6. Gifts of the Holy Spirit 72
7. Dreams and Visions 78
8. Prophecies 87
9. Angels 91
10. Godly Counsel 94
11. The Renewed Mind 99
12. Times and Seasons 105
13. Circumstances and Divine Orchestrations 113
14. Putting It All Together 123

Introduction

God has promised to lead and guide us. As believers, we sincerely desire to be led by God. We understand the importance of following His plans and purposes for our lives. We recognize that God's ways are the best for us. We seek to live according to His will for our lives.

This book is a study on some of the important ways we receive God's guidance for our lives. While there is no set formula on how to discern God's guidance, we must understand what God's Word reveals on the various ways through which God will speak His guidance into our lives. This will enable us to follow Him through all of life's decision points—small or big.

The two most important ways in which God speaks His guidance into our lives are through His Word, the written Scriptures and by the leading of His Spirit. As believers, we must know how to recognize God's will and direction through His Word and His Spirit.

In this book, we explain the primary ways as well as several other ways through which God speaks His guidance into our lives.

1) The Word
2) The indwelling Spirit
3) The voice of the Holy Spirit
4) Gifts of the Holy Spirit
5) Dreams and visions
6) Prophecies
7) Angels

8) Godly counsel
9) The renewed mind
10) Times and seasons
11) Circumstances and divine orchestrations

We then discuss on how we put all this together to arrive at discerning God's direction, and what to do in seasons when we do not seem to be hearing clearly from God.

An important truth we must bear in mind, which we see in both the Old and New Testaments, is that *"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established"* (2 Corinthians 13:1 quoted from Deuteronomy 19:15). Hence, as we determine God's direction, we will typically be hearing from God in more than one way. This is God confirming to us through two or three witnesses His direction for our lives.

While all of us will make mistakes along the way, we must understand that God is greater than our mistakes and is more than able to get us back on track and help us journey into His highest and best for our lives.

I've also taken the liberty to share certain instances, stories and anecdotes from my personal journey on receiving God's guidance. I trust that these will not in any way be self-promoting, but only be useful to illustrate how these truths are applied in daily life. While it is good to learn and be encouraged through another's experience, we must build our lives on God's Word and the work of His Spirit in us personally. Don't build your life on somebody else's experience. Be firmly established in His Word. Be yielded to His Spirit. You will then have your own experience of God leading you through your journey in life.

God Bless!
Ashish Raichur

1
God, Our Guide

We need God's guidance in various matters in life. Some may have to do with small decisions, and some may be big, major decisions. At different points in life, we need to know God's will for our next steps—a student would desire to know which academic area to focus on; someone entering professional life would desire to know which job opportunity or career path to pursue; and there are other major life decisions including the choice of one's spouse; which part of the world to live in; which local church to be part of, and so on. Our desire is to follow God through all of life's decisions. We have the wonderful privilege of having God as our Guide, and the ability to receive His guidance every step of the way.

God's promise is to lead and guide

There are several Scriptures revealing to us that God has promised to lead and guide us. This is a wonderful assurance! God is genuinely interested in the decisions we have to make and has promised His guidance.

Psalm 37:23,24

[23] The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.

[24] Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds *him with* His hand.

The steps of a good man (literally a courageous man, a valiant man, a warrior) *are ordered* (directed, set up, made perfect, made firm) *by the Lord.* God takes pleasure in the way this person is

going. As the Amplified Bible states, God "*busies Himself with his every step*" (AMPC).

God is very interested in our lives, very interested in the steps we take, the path we choose and the decisions we make. Some of us need to get rid of the notion that "God doesn't really care," or "Why would He even care about me when He has this huge, big universe to take care of?" The great God of this universe busies Himself with your every—small and big—step.

Even if we make mistakes, stumble and falter, it is not the end of everything. We are not doomed for the rest of our lives. God upholds us, or as the Amplified Bible states, "*...the Lord grasps his hand in support and upholds him*" (AMPC).

Psalm 32:8,9
[8] I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.
[9] Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule, *Which* have no understanding, *Which* must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.

What wonderful promises and assurance of guidance for us. The Lord Himself states,

I will instruct you: The expanded meaning of the word "instruct" in Hebrew *('sakal')* means "make you circumspect, intelligent, prudent and wise and give you skill so that you can have good success."

I will teach you: The word "teach" in Hebrew *('yarah')* figuratively means "to point out, as if by aiming the finger, as when shooting an arrow."

I will guide you: The word "guide" also means "to advise or counsel."

The Lord has promised to instruct, teach and guide us.

Our response to His instruction, teaching and guidance is also important. He points to two animals, the horse and the mule, that must be harnessed and held firm to go a certain way. They could either run ahead and must be held back or could be very stubborn and hard to move forward. We must avoid either of these postures.

Psalm 25:12
Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.

When we walk in reverence toward the Lord, God will teach us the way in which we should go. The Good News Translation renders this verse as, *"Those who have reverence for the Lord will learn from him the path they should follow."*

Our heart attitude determines if we are going to hear from God and receive His guidance. If we are reverent, walking in the fear of the Lord, we will not only seek His will but follow through to do His will. So, the Lord marks out those who fear Him, and makes His guidance available to them.

The revelation of God's will

At the very beginning, it is good to establish some basics or foundational truths in relation to God's will and guidance. Here are some important insights that we must understand.

1) God's will, guidance and leading are always consistent with His nature.

God is unchanging. He does not change (Malachi 3:6). He is the "*Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*" (James 1:17). God, by His nature, is constant. God's

will, purpose and guidance will always be consistent with His nature. His will is always in harmony with who He is. For instance, God is holy. So, no one can claim that God is guiding them or directing them to do something unholy.

2) God's will, guidance and leading are always consistent with His Word.

God will not lead us to do something that contradicts His Word. God's Word is truth (John 17:17). It is eternal, unchanging and is forever established in heaven (Psalm 119:89). The leading of the Spirit will always be consistent with the Word that the Spirit inspired.

[We are assuming here that our understanding of His Word is right. Sometimes, God may lead us to do something that contradicts our understanding of His Word. Consider a few examples—In the keeping of the Sabbath, the Pharisees did not permit anyone to do anything on the Sabbath. On the other hand, we see Jesus healing people on the Sabbath, and even His disciples plucking grain to eat on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8). Jesus explained that He was Lord even of the Sabbath. Or consider the apostle Peter for instance—he (and the Early Church) was not preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. So, God gives him a vision telling him to rise and eat unclean birds and animals, which Peter refused to. Subsequently, God led Peter and the Church to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts Chapters 9 and 10)].

3) God's promises are a revelation of God's will

The reason God promised us something was because He intended for us to have it. So, we can understand God's promises as an expression of His will for our lives.

4) God desires for us to know His will

God truly desires for us, His people, to know His will. God is not trying to hide His will from us so that we falter, get into all kinds of trouble and mess up our lives because we did not know His will and could not receive His guidance. On the other hand, He has made provision for us to know His will.

Consider what the Word teaches in Colossians 1.

Colossians 1:9,10
[9] For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
[10] that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

We note these three important insights.

First, Paul prayed for the believers to be filled (that means there is no lack, no shortfall, they are full up and not lacking in this) with the knowledge of God's will. The Greek word for "knowledge" ('*epignosis*') means "precise and correct knowledge, deep and clear knowledge." As believers, we can pray and have full, complete, precise, correct, deep and clear knowledge of His will for us. [**Note**: We are <u>not</u> implying that we will have all knowledge, or possess infinite knowledge, or know everything about everything. Omniscience belongs only to God. We are talking about knowing His will for our lives personally].

Second, knowing God's will comes through wisdom and spiritual understanding, or through the wisdom and understanding given to us by His Holy Spirit. As we see in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16, the Holy Spirit reveals things to us and makes the mind of Christ known to us. Hence, we must grow in wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Third, the result (outcome) of being filled with the knowledge of His will is the following:

- We walk worthy of the Lord—live a life that honors the Lord.
- We live fully pleasing to Him—live a life that pleases Him.
- We are fruitful in all we do—bear much fruit in all that He has called us to do.
- We continue to increase in our knowledge of Him.

What powerful outcomes we will have when we are filled with the knowledge of His will! The converse should also be considered, that is, if we do not know His will, we may do things that dishonor and displease Him, we may not be fruitful in what we do and we could become stagnant in our knowledge of Him.

Let's consider what the Word teaches us in Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:8-10,17
[8] For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light
[9] (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
[10] finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.
[17] Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

Now that we are light and walking as children of light, we not only display the fruit of the Spirit, but we also live our lives "finding out" (meaning testing, examining, proving, discerning, figuring out) what is "acceptable" to the Lord. The word "acceptable" in English could be misleading. To be "acceptable" could mean what is "ok," just satisfactory. However, the Greek ('*euarestos*') means what is **fully agreeable** and **well-pleasing** to the Lord. So, as believers, we are encouraged to be on this pursuit of discovering God's will, what is fully agreeable and well-pleasing to God.

Further on, in verse 17, we are instructed not to be unwise. Thayer's Greek Definitions has the following meanings of ('*aphrón*')—the Greek for "unwise" is "without reason, senseless, foolish, stupid, without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly." Instead of being unwise, we must understand what God's will is. The Greek for "understand" is "to put together, to comprehend, to set or join together in the mind, to bring together in a hostile sense, bringing two combatants together, which could imply thinking through seemingly opposing ideas." This verse is teaching us that we do not do away with our mind in understanding God's will and receiving God's guidance.

Sometimes, believers in the seeming pursuit of God's guidance and God's will, throw away all good common sense, caution and reason to the wind. When we counsel them with some simple practical instructions, they consider that as being very unspiritual and reject some plain and simple common sense. Then they get into a big mess and waste so much of their lives sorting out the mess they got themselves into. How much more useful they could have been for God's Kingdom if they had just paid attention to some practical advice. We do know that there are times God's guidance will require us to set aside constraints created by our rational mind. We will discuss more on this in the chapter on "The Renewed Mind."

5) The things that remain unknown

In as much as we seek to receive God's guidance and know His will, we must recognize that there is the realm of the unknown.

Deuteronomy 29:29
"The secret *things belong* to the Lord our God, but those *things which are* revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

There are things that God keeps reserved only for Himself. So, we must be willing to be comfortable with not having answers to all our questions. We can live at peace with the unknown and the unanswered because we have the peace that is beyond understanding (Philippians 4:6,7). This is a peace that we have even when we do not understand. And the way we step into this kind of peace is by letting go and releasing things into God's hands.

Having said that, God has clearly indicated that He wants us to be filled with the knowledge of His will. Hence, as far as guidance in living life according to His purposes, there will be no holding back from God's side to reveal what we need to know to do His will.

Are there different categories of God's will?

Romans 12:1,2

[1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

[2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Some use these two verses of Scripture to indicate three different categories or classifications of God's will—"good," "acceptable" and "perfect." However, we do not subscribe to this idea of three different categories of God's will, and it is erroneous and leads people to live compromised lives. Let's study this through.

First, we must understand that "good, acceptable and perfect" are three descriptors used to describe the same thing—the will of God. God's will IS good, acceptable and perfect. For instance, if we say that an apple is red, flavorful and

sweet-smelling, we are just using three different descriptors to describe the same thing—an apple—not three different things.

Second, the word "acceptable" does not mean "permissive" or "permittable." The word "acceptable" in Romans 12:1,2 is the same Greek word used in Ephesians 5:10, where we explained that the Greek '*euarestos*' means "what is **fully agreeable** and **well-pleasing** to the Lord." Please observe that the same word "acceptable" is used both in Romans 12:1 and Romans 12:2. In Romans 12:1, our bodies are to be holy and acceptable (fully agreeable, well-pleasing) to God. The word "acceptable" is on par with being holy. We do not in any way interpret the "acceptable" in Romans 12:1 to mean partially acceptable, permissible to God. Hence, we should remain consistent in our understanding of the word "acceptable" when we read Romans 12:2. It is the same Greek word. The word "acceptable" in Romans 12:2 means "fully agreeable and well-pleasing," the same as "good" and "perfect" will of God.

Third, if there was such a revelation of three categories of the will of God, Paul does not mention this anywhere in his epistles. Rather, we see in the other epistles (as we have seen in Colossians and Ephesians) that we can know the perfect will of God clearly.

Fourth, look at the life, teaching and ministry of Jesus Christ. We do not find Jesus teaching us about different categories of God's will. When the sick came to Him, Jesus did not have to pray to the Father about each sick person to determine if it was God's will to heal, or if it was God's "permissive will" for them to remain sick. He healed and delivered all who came to Him in faith.

What about other issues like the Fall of man, the Hebrews wanting meat in the wilderness, Israel wanting a king like their

neighboring nations, etc.? Was this the will of God? No. Did God permit it? Yes. Does this mean that there is such a thing as an "acceptable will" or "permissive will"? No, it does not. It just means that what happened was not the will of God and yet, because God has given people free will and the freedom to choose, they made these choices. God allows us to go with the choices we make, and He works with us, calling us back to Himself to see His purposes established. God goes about restoring things according to His will. As an analogy, consider this—in the city, it is not the government's will (or law) for murders to happen. But do murders happen? Yes. Does that mean that the government has a "permissive law" that permits murders to happen? Not at all! All murder is against the law. The government works to enforce the law and restore law where things have been violated.

So, what some call as the "permissive will" is really another term for what is "not God's will" and is something out of the will of God.

The danger of the notion of a "permissive" will of God is that it gives believers a very casual approach to doing the will of God. The reasoning is that "I am ok if I am in the permissive will of God so long as I am not out of the will of God." But let's get this straight—to be in what some call as the "permissive will" of God is really to be out of the will of God.

God is light, and there is no darkness in Him, neither are there any "gray areas" in Him. Our goal is to understand and walk in what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

Our responsibility: Seeking, listening and obeying

In receiving God's guidance, we have our responsibility or part to fulfill. We must seek, listen and obey.

Seeking

To seek means that we earnestly desire and ask God to guide us and direct us. We express our desire to know His will so that we can walk honoring and pleasing Him.

God invites us to seek Him and to call upon Him to receive His revelation of things we do not know.

Jeremiah 29:12,13
[12] Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.
[13] And you will seek Me and find *Me,* when you search for Me with all your heart.

Our seeking must be wholehearted. God responds to such a heart attitude.

Jeremiah 33:3
'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

Seeking leads to finding. As we earnestly inquire of God and desire to know His will and direction for our lives, we will come to understand and receive His guidance.

Matthew 7:7,8
[7] "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
[8] For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Our seeking and receiving God's guidance can take on different expressions.

Seeking His guidance during the normal course of things

As we go through our day, we walk in the Spirit, walk with a renewed mind and learn to listen to Him as and when important

decision moments arise. Maybe you are in a business meeting and must make some important decisions. Pray in your heart. Speak to Him and ask Him for His counsel and guidance. God will guide us during our day as we go through the normal course of things.

Seeking His guidance during special times of seeking

We can (and should) set aside special times of seeking when making important (major) decisions in life. This would mean that we take extra time to pray, be in His Word, worship—just be alone with Him and position ourselves to receive His guidance. Special times of seeking may also mean that we spend several days (or weeks) continuing to wait on Him until we know for sure what He desires for us to do.

Some may choose to fast and pray when seeking God's direction, especially in major decisions. Isaiah 58 teaches us that one of the outcomes of "the Chosen Fast" is His light breaking forth on our lives (Isaiah 58:8) and the Lord guiding us continually.

Isaiah 58:11
The Lord will guide you continually,
And satisfy your soul in drought,
And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Guidance during unexpected "God moments"

There are then those unexpected "God moments" where God initiates the speaking and reveals His counsel to us. We may not be necessarily asking or seeking Him for guidance, but God breaks in and speaks to us. This can come in any of the ways we will be considering later in this book.

Listening

John 10:1-5,27

1 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.
2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.
5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."
27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

A second important component to receiving God's guidance is listening.

Notice how the Lord Jesus shared what the sheep do in relation to their shepherd.

- The sheep hear his voice (v.3)—they are listening in for the shepherd's voice.
- The sheep follow him for they know his voice (vv. 4,27)—they can follow their shepherd because they know and listen for his voice.
- The sheep do not follow strangers (v. 5) because they recognize that it is not their shepherd's voice.

This indicates active involvement on the part of the sheep.

Similarly, as sheep, we can follow our Shepherd when we know, recognize and hear His voice. God is speaking. Are we listening? Are we listening in the right places and to the right voice? Are we avoiding or entertaining the wrong voices, the voice of strangers?

Psalm 23:3,4
[3] He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
[4] Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

The shepherd's rod and staff served not only for defense and protection but also to guide and keep the sheep together. There were times when the shepherd would lead the sheep from the front, calling out his voice and the sheep followed him by following his voice. There were times when the sheep took a known path and the shepherd would follow the sheep from behind. The shepherd would call out to the sheep and use his rod and staff to keep the sheep on the right path. The shepherd's voice, his rod and staff are different pictures of God's guidance to us, His sheep, to keep us on the path He wants us to take. God, our Shepherd, is guiding us. We must be willing to listen and follow.

Obeying

The third important component to receiving God's guidance is obeying. God guides us so that we can follow Him.

Proverbs 3:32
For the perverse *person* is an abomination to the Lord, But His secret counsel *is* with the upright.

God reveals His secret counsel to the upright. Why the upright? The answer is because they desire to do what is right in the eyes of God. God speaks so that we can obey Him and walk pleasing to Him.

God guides, but we must follow with faith, obedience and patience. Sometimes, obeying can be "painful" to the flesh and

to our soulish desires. But the result of obeying God's guidance is peace. All will be well.

Psalm 37:37
Mark the blameless *man*, and observe the upright; For the future of *that* man *is* peace.

Reflection



1) As we begin this journey learning how to receive God's guidance, write down one or more areas of your life where you have to make major decisions and desire to receive God's guidance.
2) Looking back at your walk with God thus far, are there instances where you were aware of God guiding you. Reflect on a few of these instances. How did you recognize and come to know God's direction for you?

2
David Inquired of God

King David in the Old Testament was a man who loved the Lord deeply and sought to follow God throughout his life. God even spoke through the prophet Samuel about David saying, *"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will"* (Acts 13:22, quoted from 1 Samuel 13:14). What an amazing testimony that God would call David "*a man after My own heart*." And what confidence for God to say about David—he *"will do all my will!"*

Over in the book of Acts, as Paul was preaching, he said of David,

Acts 13:36
"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption;

David served by the will of God. He did God's will, followed God's purposes and fulfilled God's assignment for his life.

One of the keys or secrets of David's life was that he was a man who inquired of the Lord frequently for the decisions he made.

David in his youth was known to be skillful on the harp, courageous, prudent, and good-looking and God was with him (1 Samuel 16:18). The prophet Samuel had anointed him to be the next king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:12,13). After David killed Goliath, David behaved wisely, was highly favored and regarded in Israel and people knew that the Lord was with him

(1 Samuel 18:5,7,12,14-16,30). Shortly after his triumph over Goliath, because King Saul was out to kill him, David had to run to protect himself. While David was on the run, there was a group of about four hundred men who came and joined David accepting him as their leader (1 Samuel 22:1,2). We have several records for us in Scripture from this point on when David made decisions, he inquired of God before stepping out. It would be right for us to assume that this was David's way of life from his early days, even though this is not recorded for us explicitly.

Consider what the Scripture records for us.

When your own team hesitates

1 Samuel 23:1-5

1 Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors."
2 Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"
And the Lord said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."
3 But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"
4 Then David inquired of the Lord once again.
And the Lord answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand."
5 And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

David inquired of the Lord whether he should engage the Philistines at Keilah, and the Lord told him to go ahead.

However, David's little band of four hundred men were fearful and hesitant to go into battle. So, David went back to God and inquired of the Lord a second time. He wanted to be sure. Once again, the Lord told David to go fight and assured him of

victory. David and his men experienced victory. This must have been a great "confidence booster" for David's men. They knew that their leader was hearing from God and as God led them, they would see success, even if they were just a few.

Your team is the people who are around you and who need to journey with you. This could be your own family, friends; or in a local church situation, this could be a group that you are leading; or in a workplace situation, your project team; or in a leadership situation, this could be the organization you are heading. As you receive guidance from God, there may be times when your team is not convinced. They are not on board with the idea. Go back to God. Seek Him and listen in again. Make sure you are hearing from Him. Go forward with what the Lord has spoken. Your team will see success and know that the Lord is with you!

When you face a severe setback

1 Samuel 30:1-8

1 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire,

2 and had taken captive the women and those who *were* there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried *them* away and went their way.

3 So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.

4 Then David and the people who *were* with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5 And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive.

6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David.
8 So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?"
And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake *them* and without fail recover *all*."

David's band of men had grown to about six hundred now (1 Samuel 30:9). At this time, they faced a severe setback. While they were busy and away, an enemy had attacked, plundered and taken all their families captive. It was a dismal situation to say the least. Of course, David and his men were brokenhearted. They wept. They mourned bitterly. David's men were angry with David. Imagine David's plight! He not only had to deal with personal grief and pain, but also feel and face the wrath of his own team. Yet, we see David's courage and strength. The Scripture tells us that David strengthened himself in God. He would have cried out to God, prayed, sang through his tears, loved on God and more. He drew strength from God. The next thing David did was to inquire of God. He wanted to receive God's guidance in this situation. What would God want him to do? How should David respond to the crisis? The Lord gave David guidance and direction to pursue the enemy and assured David that he and his men would recover all. And they did!

What a powerful lesson for us! When we face severe setbacks and crises that push us to a corner with our back against the wall, let's do what David did. We must strengthen ourselves in God and then receive God's guidance and direction on how to handle the situation and what action to take.

When you are transitioning in life

2 Samuel 2:1-4
1 It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?"

And the Lord said to him, "Go up."
David said, "Where shall I go up?"
And He said, "To Hebron."
2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.
3 And David brought up the men who *were* with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.
4 Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, "The men of Jabesh Gilead *were the ones* who buried Saul."

David had been running for his life, moving from place to place to stay away from King Saul who had been hunting him down. Suddenly things changed. David received news that Saul had died. The man who was after his life was no more. This was a transition point in David's life. David no longer had to keep running. He could move into a place of stability and consolidate. Again, the first thing David does was inquire of the Lord. He asked the Lord if he should relocate into any of the cities of Judah. When the Lord answered in the affirmative, David asked the Lord as to which area he should move to. God directed him to go to Hebron. As David relocated to Hebron, the people of Judah came and anointed David as their king. Amazing! This was one step closer to fulfilling his life's call of being king over all Israel. Seven and a half years later, as David was in Hebron, the leaders of the entire nation of Israel came to David and invited him to be king over all Israel (2 Samuel 5:1-5).

What an important lesson here on the value of receiving God's guidance and moving with Him as He leads and directs us. Journeying through life transitions under God's guidance will position us and take us closer to fulfilling all that God has appointed for our lives.

Same enemy, same battleground, different strategies

2 Samuel 5:17-25

17 Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* and went down to the stronghold.

18 The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

19 So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

And the Lord said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

20 So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.

21 And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

22 Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

23 Therefore David inquired of the Lord, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees.

24 And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines."

25 And David did so, as the Lord commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

After being appointed king over all Israel, David captured a fortress (stronghold, citadel) called Zion, which was the easternmost of the two hills of ancient Jerusalem, and built the City of David around it. The old enemy, the Philistines deployed themselves in the valley of Rephaim, on the west and south-west of Jerusalem. David inquired of the Lord if he should engage the enemy and God told him to go ahead and promised victory. David

and his men experienced victory and affirmed that it was God who had broken through, overpowering the enemy. Sometime later, the same enemy came back to the same place—the valley of Rephaim. Now David did not take things "business as usual." He did not act presumptuously based on his past victory. He once again inquired of the Lord. God gave him a different strategy this time. God would cause angelic armies to engage the enemy. David and his men vanquished the enemy, backed up by these heavenly armies.

The important lesson for us here is to walk in the authority and victory we have over our enemy, satan and his demons. God has given us mighty weapons to use through which we undoubtedly will walk in dominion over the enemy. Satan and his demons have only one place, under our feet (Luke 10:19; Romans 16:20; Ephesians 2:6). Yet, when this enemy comes against us and deploys his schemes, wiles and tricks against us, we can listen to God and receive His strategies on how to resist and nullify what the enemy attempts using our God-given weapons. In each battle, God will speak to us on how to stand firm and walk in dominion over a defeated foe.

When things are going wrong for no apparent reason

2 Samuel 21:1
Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, "*It is* because of Saul and *his* bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites."

David faced several challenges as king of Israel. At one point during his reign, a famine prevailed for three continuous years. David must have been very concerned. So, he asked the Lord about this. God revealed the root cause of the problem. It had to do with a violation committed by his predecessor, King Saul, by attacking the Gibeonites, whom Israel had promised

to protect (2 Samuel 21:2). So, David proceeded to repent and restore things with the Gibeonites. The famine came to a stop.

How important it is to hear from God and receive His guidance in similar situations that we face. When things seem to go wrong without any obvious reason, we need to ask the Lord for the cause. Why? What is causing such things to happen? Then we listen in. God will speak His counsel to us so that we can take action and see change.

Different ways of inquiring of the Lord

We have considered only a few of the instances where David heard from God and was directed by God during his life. There obviously may have been many more instances that are not recorded for us. However, it becomes clear to us that one reason why David was a man after God's own heart and why David fulfilled all the will of God in his lifetime was because He sought and received God's guidance through all seasons of his life.

We do not have all details of how David may have heard from God each time. We know God may have spoken to David by revelation in his spirit, through dreams, through the Urim and the Thummim, through prophets around David, etc. The important thing is that David learned to ask the Lord for guidance, receive His guidance and follow God's directives. This played a large part in David being who he was. A man who consistently inquired from God and lived a life led and guided by God.

Our objective in this book is to discover how we, as God's people under the New Covenant, can hear from God and receive His guidance as we journey through life. May it be said of us that we were a people after His own heart, and we fulfilled all the will of God in our generation.

Reflection



Have you been through situations similar to what David faced, which we have considered in this chapter? Reflect on those experiences. Did you inquire of the Lord? What was the outcome? Would there be things you would do differently next time around?

1) When your own team hesitates
2) When you face a severe setback
3) When you are transitioning in life
4) Same enemy, same battleground, different strategies
5) When things are going wrong for no apparent reason

3
The Word

God primarily leads and guides us by His Word and the Holy Spirit. The written Scriptures are the most important way for us to determine what is right in God's eyes, what His will is and what He would have us do. Every other form of divine guidance is submitted and tested in accordance with the written Scriptures.

In this chapter, we share simple insights on receiving guidance through God's written Word.

Let us consider a few Scriptures to begin with.

Psalm 119:105
Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Imagine having to walk in the dark. That would be dangerous. We would have no idea where we are going, where to put our steps, how to avoid dangers, etc. We naturally reach for our torchlight to light up the way ahead of us. Once we have a torchlight shining ahead of us, we can walk confidently. We are sure of our next step. We could even flash the light ahead of us and see a little way ahead and know the direction we are headed. God's Word is our torchlight for our journey through life. God's Word is like a lamp (torchlight) that guides our steps, a light that shows us the path we should take.

Psalm 119:130
The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.

God's Word enlightens us and gives us light, understanding and wisdom. Imagine you are ushered into a room that is totally dark. There could be other people seated in the room. The room could be well decorated. There could be a table with all kinds of nice food to eat. But none of these have much meaning and use. It is hard to make sense of things in the dark. Once the light comes on, there is a huge sigh of relief because now everything makes sense. Similarly, in life, we may come into situations where things just don't make sense. We don't know what to do. But in those moments, God's Word enlightens us. We can see and understand God's purpose, meaning and direction in that situation. We receive wisdom and understanding on what to do and how to move ahead through that life situation. God guides us through His Word.

Psalm 37:31
The law of his God *is* in his heart; None of his steps shall slide.

God's Word in us establishes our steps, making them firm and secure so that we do not stumble and fall. When we walk guided by the Word of God, every step we take is strong and solid. The winds, waves and storms may lash against us, but we are able to stand because our steps are being ordered by God through His Word. His Word is a solid, unshakeable and firm foundation.

Here are some common ways that God speaks, leads and guides us through His written Word.

The instructions in God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16,17
16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

All Scripture is God-inspired and is given to us to **teach** us ("doctrine" means "teaching"), to give us **conviction** ("reproof" means "conviction"), to **correct** us (to straighten us, to lead, guide, direct us) and to **instruct** us (educate, train, discipline, tutor, equip, skill us) for right living.

Notice that the verse states "all Scripture." So, we need to progressively become familiar with all of Scripture, with the whole counsel of God, not just parts of it. As believers, we need to read and keep discovering all of Scripture.

We must become familiar with what God has already stated in His written Word concerning various areas of our lives. These are instructions that we must obey. For example, we know that God has already stated in His Word how a husband should relate to his wife and a wife to her husband. God has already stated in His Word how parents are to relate to their children and children to their parents. God has given us instructions on how to handle money, and so on.

In matters where the Scripture already reveals the heart, mind and will of God, we do not need to ask God whether we need to follow that. There is no need to pray and ask God if He wants you to obey a command that He has already given to us in the Scripture. It is obvious that He wants us to follow His instruction. Hence, as we make decisions, God's Word, the written Scripture, becomes our starting point. We must stay aligned to the instructions in God's Word as we make our choices.

There will be times when you would need to study what God's Word states on certain matters to know what God has already spoken about such situations. You go to God and ask Him to speak to you through His Word. Then you begin to search the Scripture. You put everything together. You receive

guidance and instruction from God's Word on what to do about the situation you are facing. When I was running my technology business (2001-2014), there were many times I had difficult decisions to make in the business when handling customers, handling employees, handling challenging situations, and I would search the Scriptures and study God's Word to find out what God's Word had to say specifically in relation to those situations. I would make decisions based on God's Word. This is one example of receiving God's guidance through His Word. I continue to do this in various situations of life. Always start with the written Word of God for making decisions in life.

The quickened Word

Then there are other times when seeking God's guidance that God speaks to us through the quickening of the written Word specifically to our situation. The quickening of the Word can come in many ways. We mention a few here.

You may be praying about a certain decision and then you see in a passage of Scripture, insights that address your matter directly. The mind of the Lord becomes clear to you. You recognize what God would have you do and the decision He would have you make in your situation.

This can happen during your time of reading the Scripture, perhaps during your daily reading. A verse or passage "jumps at" you from the pages of the Bible. An understanding, a fresh insight suddenly seems to open up from a familiar passage. As the Psalmist prayed, your eyes have been opened to see something wonderful from His Word (Psalm 119:18). The finger of God seems to be pointing you in a certain direction through a verse or passage of Scripture during your time in His Word.

At other times, you may be going about your daily routine and suddenly, a verse of Scripture is brought to your mind. Jesus

said that the Holy Spirit will "*bring to your remembrance*" (John 14:26) what the Lord has taught us. That verse of Scripture coming to your mind would serve, among other things, to bring God's guidance and direction to your life. This is another way the Word can be quickened to us to bring God's guidance.

The quickening of the Word is one of the most common ways that I personally receive God's guidance. On many occasions, when I need to make important decisions, I would go alone into my room to pray, place my request before God for His guidance on the matter and then get into a time of praying in tongues. During my time of praying in tongues, often a verse or passage of Scripture would come up in my spirit. This is God quickening His Word to me to guide me in the matter I am praying over. I know God has spoken, and I have received the guidance I had asked for. Now it is for me to obey His Word in that situation.

March 1990: Spiritual Skills Course, Manipal

I did my bachelor's degree in Engineering at Manipal, Karnataka from 1986 to 1990. During the third year, in January 1989, I had started weekly Saturday meetings that we used to call "Believers Fellowship Meetings" (more on this later). Davis Johnraj was a student in the medical college, who was also part of the fellowship, and my plan was to hand over the leadership to Davis once I graduated and left. Sometime around March 1990, Davis had gone to Vellore to attend a Spiritual Skills Course conducted by Drs. Mark & Betsy Neuenschwander. They were American Board-Certified Physicians, both having double specialities. Davis called and asked if we could have Drs. Mark & Betsy come to Manipal and do the Spiritual Skills Course for the students there. This would be a two-day, shortened version. I had to make a decision. There were two things on my mind as the leader of the student fellowship that had students from the medical and engineering colleges. First, the semester exams for

the engineering colleges were just a few weeks away. Hosting and attending such an event would mean that many of us would lose three or four days just before our semester exams. Would this affect our performance in the examinations? The second concern was the cost of hiring the seminar hall in the hotel for two additional days to host this event. With all these thoughts going on in my mind, I informed Davis that I would get back to him. As I recall, I was inclined not to go ahead with hosting the Spiritual Skills Course. But here is what happened. The next morning, just as I was waking up, I saw a mini vision of my heart and something moving across it, like the windshield wiper blades of a car and "heard" (not audibly) the verses from Proverbs 3:5,6. It happened in a moment. In a flash. Immediately, I knew that God had spoken very clearly through the quickened Word. Even though I still had questions and concerns in my mind, God had spoken. I informed Davis that we will go ahead and host the Spiritual Skills Course in Manipal with Drs. Mark & Betsy Neuenschwander. This was the beginning of something monumental in the life of the student fellowship in Manipal. In subsequent years, Drs. Mark & Betsy returned to Manipal and saw a powerful move of God's Spirit that impacted the lives of many students. The fruit of that time of ministry is still spoken of by the students who were touched during their visits.

And like this, there have been numerous occasions while making decisions that God has spoken through the quickened Word.

January 2013: Keep APC Mangalore going

There was a time when our church plant in Mangalore was not doing too well. The number of people in attendance had gone down and we did not have anyone to lead the local church. I was quite discouraged and from all practical standpoints the only logical step was to close the local church and request the few

who were attending to find a place in some other local church. There seemed to be no other option. I was praying and asking the Lord what to do about this. Should we close down or should we keep things going? If we should keep things going, who will lead the work? We did not have anyone at that time who could take full responsibility of the work there in Mangalore. On Sunday January 13, 2013, God quickened Isaiah 40:1-11 to my heart in response to my seeking Him about this matter. I marked it up in my Bible. This was God's answer. So, I decided APC Mangalore will keep going. I took it upon myself, for that season, to lead APC Mangalore. It was not easy. Leading the local churches in Bangalore and going to Mangalore every Sunday, and to build things up from where they were. Many times, during that season, my mind used to question the practicality of what I was doing. Every time doubts and questions came to my mind, I would go back to Isaiah 40:1-11 and declare that over APC Mangalore. I chose to hold on to the quickened Word that God had given me for APC Mangalore. Although this was a challenging time, things paid off eventually. At the time of writing this book (June 2019), APC Mangalore has a wonderful pastor couple leading the work and is a thriving local church.

The Word preached

Another commonly experienced way that God will bring His guidance to our lives using the written Word is when we hear the Word being preached. Maybe you came to a church service praying about a matter. Then through the Word being preached, it seems that God is addressing exactly the things that are upon your heart. Interestingly, there would be many listening to the same message and all feel that God is speaking to them directly, although the matters on each one's heart may be so different. Only God can do something like this where the written Word being preached becomes His counsel to so many of His people

simultaneously on various matters. Sometimes, you hear multiple sermons from different people and God seems to be saying the same thing to you through all of them. Sometimes this can happen through a sermon on a Christian TV program or a podcast you listen to, or a book you are reading. God's Word can be proclaimed through various channels. As the Word preached falls on your heart, you know God has spoken and given you the guidance and direction you were seeking. Now it is your turn to obey the Lord.

The inner voice—the voice of our conscience

A fourth way in which God uses His written Word to counsel, guide and direct us is through the inner voice, our own conscience. Our conscience is our own spirit speaking to us. The voice of our human spirit is called the conscience.

Job 32:8
But *there is* a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

Psalm 51:6
Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.

Proverbs 20:27
The spirit of a man *is* the lamp of the Lord, Searching all the inner depths of his heart.

God breathes (inspires, releases revelation) into our human spirit. He causes us to know wisdom in our spirit. Our human spirit is like a lamp that God uses to search us out as well as to guide us.

Our conscience bears witness or speaks aligned to what has been written on our hearts (Romans 2:15). When our human spirit is trained with the Word of God and is in submission

to the Holy Spirit, then the voice of our own spirit—our own conscience—becomes a reliable guide. We just follow our conscience, which speaks to us aligned to God's Word and according to God's inspiration. The apostle Paul said that he "*lived in all good conscience before God*" (Acts 23:1). He always strived "*to have a conscience without offense toward God and men*" (Acts 24:16).

This is part of the New Covenant life. God writes His Word on our minds and our hearts and each one will know the Lord (Hebrews 8:10,11).

As believers, we receive God's guidance through the voice of our conscience when we have His Word written on our minds and hearts. Learn to listen to your conscience. Is your conscience clear and pure? Or do you feel your conscience has been wronged, violated, offended or hurt in any way? If you have wronged your conscience, it means you have done something that is against the Word of God. When you are about to make a decision, you will find something amiss, something wrong on the inside. We often express it as "my conscience will not allow me to do this." There is a check inside you coming from your own conscience—the voice of your spirit that has the Word of God written in it. You must follow your conscience. When you do, you will be following God's Word and walking in His guidance for your life.

Rightly divide the Word

2 Timothy 2:15
Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We have to be careful in how we handle God's Word. We have to "rightly divide" (make a straight cut, dissect or expound correctly) the Word of truth. God is not responsible for our

misinterpreting and misapplication of His Word. An incorrect understanding of God's Word will lead to a misapplication of the Word that can cause all kinds of problems. Incorrect understanding of God's Word can lead to strange doctrines that are like bad food; they do not benefit us, instead make us sick spiritually (Hebrews 13:9). Hence, it is important to study the whole counsel of God to understand the ways and thoughts of God.

Don't misuse Scripture

Having said that God leads and guides us through His written Word, sometimes, people start doing weird things with the Bible. Sometimes when someone wants to receive God's guidance, they close the Bible, then randomly open the Bible to some place, put their finger somewhere and then look to see what that verse of Scripture has to say. They take this to be God's guidance for their lives. While God may use this if He chooses to, please understand that this is not the way God has called us to use Scripture. We are to read, meditate and study His Word so we can live by His Word, not "play" with His Word as little children would.

We must not misuse the Scripture. It is possible to take the Scripture out of context, twist and turn and make them support what we want in our own selfish interests. Do not do this. For example, if a young man, falls in love with a young lady, he may tend to "see her" in almost every Scripture passage he reads. Almost every page in the Bible will seem to have a Scripture to confirm that she is the one for him. So, he keeps sending her many Scripture confirmations as to why she must marry him. The sweet young lady on the other hand does not seem to have even a single confirmation from Scripture. She reads the same Scripture passages, and she sees clearly that it has nothing to do with marriage and has nothing to say about the two of them.

She is totally confused and is under tremendous pressure by this super-spiritual young man, who has visions of her all the time and revelations of her in almost every Scripture passage. While this may sound amusing, it is not very uncommon. This is a misuse of Scripture. Therefore, young people need to be taught God's Word and learn how to receive God's guidance the right way. This book in many ways is lovingly and happily dedicated to all young people who long to hear from God and receive His guidance for their lives.

Reflection



1) What are some of the major decisions you need to make at this stage in your life (**Example:** relating to parents, marriage, career, church, ministry, relating to your boss)? For each major decision, try to write down what you know are the general instructions in God's Word that you need to abide by.
2) Ask God to speak to you through His written Word about decisions you need to make. Be open to hearing from Him either through the reading of His Word in your daily time with Him, or through the quickening of the Word at other moments of your day, or even as you hear the Word preached. Write down what you hear from the Lord.

4

The Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit

The Lord Jesus promised to send us another Helper, the Holy Spirit, who will be to us all that Jesus is. The Lord Jesus, as our Shepherd, is our Guide. The Holy Spirit is our Guide. The Holy Spirit speaks to us what the Lord Jesus our Shepherd is speaking to us.

John 16:13,14
13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.
14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you.

The word "*guide*" in verse 13 means to "show the way." The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. Since the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth, He can and will also guide us personally into all that is pleasing and acceptable to God in all the decisions we need to make. He will also reveal things to us ahead of time. He will take of what Jesus is speaking to us and communicate that to us.

Let's take a close look at this passage in 1 Corinthians 2.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16
9 But as it is written:
"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."
10 But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

[11] For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God 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 that have been freely given to us by God.
[13] These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
[14] But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned.
[15] But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.
[16] For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Verses 9,10: The things that God has prepared for us, He reveals them to us by His Spirit. The Greek word for "revealed" ('*apokaluptó*') means "to take off the cover, to unveil, make manifest, to disclose what was before the unknown." God unveils things to us by His Spirit.

Verses 11,12: It is only the Spirit of God who knows the things of God. We have received the Spirit of God so that we will know (see, perceive, know) the things that God has freely given to us. This of course will include all that God has prepared for us to walk in as individuals (Ephesians 2:10). The Holy Spirit makes these known to us.

Verses 13-15: The things that the Holy Spirit reveals to us have to be understood spiritually. Those living only by the natural mind will not be able to understand and comprehend the things the Holy Spirit reveals. As spiritual people, we must judge (examine, investigate) everything before we accept them.

Verse 16: Because the Holy Spirit reveals things to us, we have the mind of Christ. We can know what our Lord Jesus thinks about a particular matter.

As New Testament believers, we have the mind of Christ because of the revelatory work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes the mind of Christ available to us. He imparts the thoughts, intents, feelings, plans, purposes, decisions, desires and directives of Jesus to us.

There are several different ways through which the Holy Spirit reveals the things of God and the mind of Christ to us. We will cover these in individual chapters as we address the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, the voice of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, dreams, visions and prophecies.

Let's understand first about the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

The inner witness of the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:14-16
14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."
16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

The sons of God—the people who belong to God's family as His sons and daughters—are characterized by this fact that they are led by the Spirit of God. We therefore, have the privilege of being led and guided by the Spirit of God. In fact, it is the Holy Spirit, Himself, who has made us sons and daughters of God. He is the Spirit of adoption. He bears witness (literally meaning "to bear joint witness, to testify by joint evidence, to corroborate by concurrent evidence") with our spirit that we are the children of God (v.16). This verse is teaching us that **the**

way we know we are children of God—the inner conviction, the inner knowing, the inner assurance—comes through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we conclude that the Holy Spirit uses the inner witness as one of His primary ways to not only confirm our adoption as sons and daughters, but also to lead and guide us, now that we are sons and daughters.

The inner witness comes to us through conviction, knowing, assurance, impressions, feelings and sensations, which the Holy Spirit gives to us in our spirit. You can imagine these to be a gentle touch, a gentle tap, a gentle nudge or a gentle nod from the Holy Spirit.

It is important to understand that these are not the same as what we feel in our own emotions. We must be careful not to confuse the inner witness of the Holy Spirit with our own thoughts, desires and feelings that we have in our soul.

1 Corinthians 6:17
But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

One of the things that has happened to us spiritually, after we've been born again, is that we have become one spirit with the Lord, or spiritually one with Him. Our spirit is joined with and has become one with Him who is Spirit. Hence, this is where He communes with us and we with Him. This is where He speaks to us. One of the ways He speaks is by the inner witness of the Spirit.

We list several different ways in which the inner witness of the Holy Spirit can be communicated to our Spirit. This list is not exhaustive, but covers some of the common ways in which we receive the inner witness of the Spirit.

1) Quickening of Scripture
2) The assurance within

3) The desire within
4) The knowing within
5) The prompting within
6) The stirring within
7) The foreknowledge within
8) The warning within

We have broken things down to help us understand and recognize the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. Very often, we are not able to walk in our inheritance as sons and daughters because no one has shared a revelation of these things with us. We live far below what is ours, and we do not even know that we are actually missing out on so much. Our understanding of the "normal Christian life" is so limited because we have not received the revelation of what is ours. Hence, we trust that breaking things down in this practical, understandable manner, will only serve to make it easy for many sons and daughters of God to be led by the Spirit of God.

Although we have listed out eight ways in which the inner witness of the Holy Spirit comes to us, very often, these work together. So, the Holy Spirit could be testifying to our spirit in more than one of these eight ways simultaneously. Further, please also keep in mind that the inner witness of the Holy Spirit can come along with the voice of the Spirit, which we will discuss in the next chapter. Hence, God speaks to us in a multiplicity of ways and we must recognize these and put them all together as we discern and receive His guidance and direction for our lives.

Other than the quickening of Scripture, for the remaining seven kinds of inner witness, we must have proper checks to validate what we are sensing in our spirit. We will discuss this toward the end of this chapter.

1) Quickening of Scripture

We have discussed this in the previous chapter. The Holy Spirit can gently remind you of a specific Scripture in relation to a matter regarding which you are trying to make a decision. The Spirit of God causes the Scripture to come up in your spirit. This quickening usually happens so gently that we can tend to miss it if we are not sensitive in our spirit.

2) The assurance within

Philippians 4:6,7
6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:15
And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Both these verses teach us that believers should be walking with the peace of God in their hearts and minds. When we release our concerns to God as in Philippians 4:6, we can then experience the peace of God so filling us that it stands "guard," Greek ('*phroureó*') meaning to be a watcher in advance, that is, to mount guard as a sentinel, to hem in and to protect our hearts and minds. The peace of God stands as the guard of our minds, keeping all disturbances out!

This peace from God also plays another important role in our hearts. According to Colossians 3:15, it serves to "rule" in our hearts. The word "rule" in Greek *('brabeuó')* means "to be an umpire, to decide, to determine, to direct, to control, to arbitrate and to govern." So, the peace of God acts as an umpire, as a directing, determining and deciding factor in our hearts.

So, the presence or absence of peace (stillness, calmness) from the Holy Spirit in your heart when you are considering a certain decision, deciding on a course of action or in the middle of a situation serves as an umpire, a directing, determining and deciding factor. We refer to this as the assurance within, brought to us by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

If we live in the Spirit, we will walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16,18,25). When we walk in the Spirit, yielded to, under the influence, under the direction and led by the Spirit, we will have the fruit of the Spirit that includes joy and peace (Galatians 5:22,23).

So, as you go about your decision making, see if you have the inner witness giving you the assurance through the peace and joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. If you have His peace and joy, proceed to do what you are determined to do. If you fail to have peace and joy, but feel otherwise, troubled, disturbed, etc., pause, don't proceed yet. Wait. You must not move ahead on the decision or you may have to wait for a better time.

3) The desire within

Psalm 37:4
Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

The word "give" has a very broad meaning and includes "to put, to make, to cause, to bestow." So, as we delight ourselves in God, He puts, makes or fashions the desires of our hearts. As we walk in obedience to God, He inspires and shapes the desires that spring up within us. And then of course, He causes them to come to pass and bestows the fulfillment of these desires on our lives as well.

Proverbs 10:24
The fear of the wicked will come upon him,
And the desire of the righteous will be granted.

John 15:7
If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

These Scriptures seem to be like a "blank cheque" when it states that we will have what we desire. However, we must notice the qualifiers of "the righteous"—of us abiding in Him and His Word abiding in us. As we walk in this manner, the Holy Spirit, through the inner witness, fashions, puts and creates the right desires in our hearts. We must recognize these godly desires birthed in us by His Spirit and then follow God into seeing these happen.

October 1981: Earliest desires

The Lord touched my life in a very simple way in October 1981 just about a month before my thirteenth birthday. One of the earliest desires that came alive inside of me was to share the Gospel. No one told me to go share the Gospel. It just came up within me. I followed this desire and started evangelizing, leading many of my young friends to the Lord. Soon there came a desire to teach His Word, and I followed that desire and started doing so. I started preaching and teaching from the age of 13. At that time, I did not have any knowledge of God's call on my life to be a pastor or a preacher or a teacher. I was just following the desires being birthed in my heart, which eventually helped me to discover God's direction and purpose for my life.

Since that time, many of the things I do often originate from a desire birthed inside by the inner witness of the Spirit as I delight in Him.

1985-1986: The desire to be a professional and serve God

As I completed my 10th grade (1984) in Bishop Cotton Boys' school, Bangalore, I was burning with zeal and passion for the Lord. I did not want to do anything else except preach the Gospel and serve the Lord. I saw no great purpose in studying (education) and felt that the Lord Jesus was coming quickly, and I should not waste my time in education. I must be out there evangelizing and making disciples. So, I fully intended to discontinue my education. But God in His grace and mercy guided me otherwise. (More on this in the chapter on "Godly Counsel.") So, I found myself back in school for the 11th and 12th grades with the plan of going to Bible College (Seminary) after my 12th grade. During these two years 1985 and 1986, slowly things began to change in my heart. A desire to be a professional and serve God began to grow inside me. I felt the need to let my life be a model, a testimony to people that one can be a professional, be educated, be a success in the world and still be someone passionate for God, fully involved in the work of God's Kingdom and serving Him. The desire to be both a "priest and king" so to speak, began to fill my heart. I believe God brought about this change and birthed this desire in me. And so, I began to follow this desire. In engineering college (1986-1990), this crystallized further, and I began to have a desire rise within me to establish a technology company that would be based on biblical principles. Even though I did not know how and what this would look like, I began to dream in line with the desire within. I share in a later chapter on "Circumstances and Divine Orchestrations" how God fulfilled this desire and used it for His Kingdom purposes.

While the above two are examples of desires birthed by the Spirit that served a purpose well into the future, there will be times when by His inner witness, the Holy Spirit births a desire

to serve an immediate purpose at a given point in time. Here is one such example.

December 1992: Missions to Eastern Europe

While I was a student in the USA, around September / October of 1992, I felt a strong desire to go to Eastern Europe on missions to preach the Gospel. Beyond this, I had no information, no contacts and had no idea how this desire would even take place. So, I shared this desire with one of the leaders in the local church that I was attending at that time. They were in touch with a missionary couple who had recently gone into Albania. And with this connect, I was in Albania in December of 1992, preaching the Gospel in some remote places. Interestingly, Albania was a country that was essentially closed to the outside world for about 50 years, and had only started opening in 1990. It was an honor to be in that country at that time to share the Gospel with people, many of whom had never heard the name of Jesus, and teach His Word.

The next three kinds of inner witness that we discuss—the knowing within, the prompting within, and the stirring within—are very similar. They vary in their intensity and urgency.

4) The knowing within

Acts 7:23-25

23 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian.

25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

When Moses was about 40 years of age, something rose up in his heart that gave him an understanding that God would deliver the Hebrews through him. He may not have known how

that was going to happen. But he just knew that this was his assignment from God. It was a knowing inside of him.

Similarly, the Holy Spirit, through the inner witness, creates a knowing to rise up within you. You just know what the right thing to do is because that knowing has come into your spirit by the Spirit's inner witness.

1983: Knowing my life assignment

Even before I turned 15 years of age, a "knowing" gripped my heart. I knew that I was to establish a church in Bangalore city, and see India reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There were no prophecies, no visions, no angelic visitations, nothing spectacular. This came just as a knowing inside me until it "filled me." This was more than just a wish. This was something that seemed to "consume" me. It filled my imagination. I would dream about this. I would see myself going through the length and breadth of the nation preaching Jesus, raising up churches and impacting the nation. With time, this only kept getting stronger inside me. This was my life assignment, and it came to me through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit as He created a knowing inside of me.

August 1999: Time to move back to India

In 1990, I had left to the USA for my Master's degree in engineering. I knew that I would come back to India to fulfill my life assignment. "How" and "when" were something I was yet to determine. All through my time in the USA, the vision of raising up a strong church in Bangalore, of impacting the nation of India with the Gospel, was burning strong in my heart. I would continue to pray asking for God's direction and timing on when to step in to fulfill this vision. During the years that followed, I travelled to India a few times and ministered in different places conducting

Gospel meetings and pastors' conferences. In May 1995, Amy and I were married and although we were living in the USA, we knew we were going to move to India at the right time. In August 1999, during one of these visits to India, we were conducting some meetings in Agra, and I just had a knowing rise up within me that it was time to move back. This again came as a knowing within, through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. There was no spectacular guidance of visions, dreams, prophecies, angels, etc. for this major decision. I shared this with Amy and we were in agreement. We decided to give ourselves about a year to prepare to move back to India. We began praying and preparing and made the move to India in December 2000. I consider those ten years, from 1990 to 2000, as years of preparation for the work that was ahead of us.

5) The prompting within

The prompting of the Holy Spirit that comes through the inner witness is like having someone give you a little push or a strong encouragement to do something. You feel prompted—a strong urge or nudging in your spirit—to do something. The prompting is stronger than the knowing, and it usually moves you to take action immediately. If we maintain sensitivity in our spirit, we will recognize that many times the Holy Spirit prompts us to do things. Sometimes, it may be to call someone on the phone. He may prompt us to go visit someone or to do something. These nudges require our immediate attention and action.

November 2002: Starting APC Bangalore South (Jayanagar)

After returning to India in December 2000, we had started a software company in January and the church in February 2001. The software company had its office in RT Nagar, Bangalore. At that time, there was a young man named David, who was

employed by the company, but would also help with the administrative work for All Peoples Church (APC). It must have been sometime in September of 2002, one day in the office, during the first half of the day, I suddenly felt a prompting that it was time to start a new church location in south Bangalore. There was nothing spiritual about the moment. I was going about my regular work in the company, but the prompting was strong and clear. I left my desk, walked straight up to David and told him to find a place in south Bangalore in the Jayanagar area, where we will start a new location for the church (we call this APC South). In those days, we used telephone books. So, David opened to the Yellow pages in the telephone book, and the first real estate person he called had a commercial place available that could hold about 70 to 100 people. This was in a good location in Jayanagar. The landlord was ready to rent it out for us to hold our church services. All this happened so easily and so quickly. We went and saw the place and it was just right. There was some amount of interior work to be done. We signed the lease agreement and a few weeks later, we launched APC South in November of 2002.

6) The stirring within

Another way the inner witness of the Spirit is communicated to us is through a stirring in our spirits. The stirring within is something that is stronger than a prompting. It is a strong call to action.

We see several examples in Scripture where people were stirred up in their hearts and were moved into action.

Exodus 35:21,26

[21] Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, *and* they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.

[26] And all the women whose hearts stirred with wisdom spun yarn of goats' *hair.*

Exodus 36:2
Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work.

In Exodus, we see that the hearts of the people were stirred and they became willing to give generously of what they had for the building of the tabernacle. Their hearts were also stirred to do work in the construction of the tabernacle. Surely God can do the same even today as well. He can stir up people's hearts to give and to work for His Kingdom.

2 Chronicles 36:22
Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

Ezra 1:1
Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

In Chronicles and Ezra, we see that the spirit of a Persian king, who did not know God personally, was stirred up to be favorable toward the Jewish people, to send them back to their own land and permit them to rebuild their city and temple. God can do the same today. He can stir up the hearts of leaders and those in authority to carry out His purposes.

Nehemiah 1:1-4
[1] The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.
It came to pass in the month of Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, as I was

in Shushan the citadel,
[2] that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.
[3] And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."
[4] So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 2:12
Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode.

Nehemiah was so stirred after hearing the news about the walls of the city of Jerusalem that he sat, wept, mourned, fasted and prayed for many days. Later, he understood that the stirring he felt was something God had put in his heart (Nehemiah 2:12). Often, the stirring in our hearts is God moving us into action for the work He wants us to carry out.

Haggai 1:14
So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God,

The work on the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem had been abandoned for about 16 years. Haggai records that the Lord stirred up the spirits of the governor, the high priest and all the people to get back to working on rebuilding the temple. God used the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to prophesy and strengthen the people in their work (Ezra 5:1,2). So, we see here that many people were stirred up to come together and carry out the work

God wanted done. God does similar things today as He stirs up the hearts of people to band together and carry out His purposes.

Act 17:16
Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked ("stirred" KJV) **within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.**

There are times God will use things we see, observe and experience to cause a stirring within us and move us into action. This happened to Paul at Athens when he saw the idolatry in the city and began to proclaim the Gospel to the people.

Usually, a stirring in our spirit is something we cannot miss. However, what we need to be careful of is not to confuse an emotional response to a situation with a stirring that comes from the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

August 1982: Preaching at RTMC, Bangalore

October 1981, just before I turned 13 years of age, was when the Lord Jesus Christ touched my life in a simple yet definite way. A newfound passion for the Lord Jesus gripped my heart. I was also passionate about sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the people I met. Those days, as a family, we attended the Richmond Town Methodist Church (RTMC) in Bangalore. We used to attend the Sunday evening services at RTMC. Less than a year after experiencing Jesus, if my recollection serves me right, it must have been August of 1982, one Sunday evening, while sitting in the service, something began to stir up within me. I felt a strong stirring to go and pray. A stirring and a passion for the lost seemed to grip my heart. So, I got up, went out of the sanctuary and into a hall nearby. (This was called Stephen's hall. This building has since been demolished). I began to pray and felt a great burden for all those in the church service who did not know Jesus as their Savior. During this time of prayer, I felt I

heard an inner voice tell me "Ask the pastor if he can give you 15 minutes to preach in the morning and in the evening services." I know this sounds completely strange, but this experience was something I could not deny. I kept this in my heart. It was close to the end of the church service, and once I felt the stirring and burden lift, I returned to meet my parents. I held this in my heart for a week, and the following Saturday, I met with the pastor, Rev. Ravi Joseph, and presented this request to him. He said that he would get back to me in a week or two. I do not know how pastor Ravi Joseph processed this. But sure enough, about a week later, he met me and informed me that he would permit me to speak for 15 minutes during the Sunday services both morning and evening on the following Sunday. I was just a 13-year-old lad and had no experience in preaching in a church service. This was my very first time. I took my text from Matthew 7, did the best I could and preached my heart out! Nothing seemed to happen in the morning service. But that Sunday evening, after I preached, about 30 young people (students) from Baldwin Boys' High School stayed back to give their lives to Jesus Christ. It was more than what I had anticipated. To follow up with these students who had just given their lives to Christ, I decided to go to their school and meet with them every school day for 20 minutes during the lunch break. I would run (some days use a cycle) from my school, Bishop Cotton Boys' School to Baldwin Boys' High School, just to preach to these students for about 20 minutes during lunch break and run back to my school, in time for the afternoon classes. This also opened up a ministry opportunity to students in a neighboring school, Cathedral High School. So, for four days a week, I would go to Baldwin and once a week on Wednesdays, I would go to Cathedral High School. This continued for about four years, from my 9th grade till 12th grade (1982-1986). Acting upon a stirring within caused a door of ministry to open that kept me busy for four years and touched

the lives of many students along the way. Every now and then, I get to meet someone whose life was touched during those four years.

7) The foreknowledge within

God is a God who speaks to His people and reveals things ahead of time for our benefit. He knows the end from the very beginning. He knows things that are yet to happen. He speaks such matters to us, giving us foreknowledge of things that would concern our lives, so that we can prepare for what lies ahead.

Isaiah 42:9
Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Isaiah 46:10
Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'

The Lord Jesus taught us in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit would show us things to come. This means that the Spirit of God will reveal things to us ahead of time. While this foreknowledge can come from the Holy Spirit through different ways (**Example**: prophecies, dreams, etc.), one important way is through the inner witness. Through the inner witness, the Holy Spirit gives a foreknowledge, a knowing in advance, about things to come. There is an unveiling of God's purposes in your spirit. You have a knowing of things in advance so that you can get yourself ready. This is very similar to what we have seen earlier in ***"A knowing within,"*** but the emphasis here is about knowing things well in advance so that you can prepare yourself. The Holy Spirit through the inner witness gives you foreknowledge inside you of certain things.

Simeon, you won't die until you see Him.

Luke 2:25-32

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,
28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:
29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation
31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
32 A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."

We read about Simeon in Luke 2. Simeon had an interesting experience. The Scripture states that it had been revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. We do not know how Simeon received this revelation. But Simeon knew this about himself. It had to do with something about his future. He had this foreknowledge about what God had intended for him. We also see another very interesting thing. On a certain day, Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit to come to the temple at a particular time with the understanding that this was the day he was going to see the Messiah. And of all the people in the temple that day, Simeon recognized Jesus as the One, the Messiah, the Salvation of the Lord! So, we see two levels of foreknowledge given by the Holy Spirit. One that had a longer term, having to do with Simeon's life. The other was for that day and moment, that today, Simeon would see the Messiah. The Holy Spirit works in a similar manner in our day and reveals things ahead of time for us.

May 1993: Plan for the next 10 years

One day in May 1993, I sat down, tried to listen to the Holy Spirit and wrote out on paper what I felt the Lord was witnessing (revealing inside me) in my spirit about the next 10 years. I wrote out several things including getting married, moving back to India, starting a technology company, planting a local church in Bangalore and travelling to minister God's Word. These were things I felt that the Holy Spirit was revealing to my spirit and I just wrote them down. And sure enough, over the next 10 years, all the things I had written down took place. I found this very encouraging and continue to, from time to time, write out what I feel God is placing in my heart for the journey ahead, sometimes a decade or more in advance. At a personal level, this is receiving foreknowledge by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit who is here to show us things ahead of time.

8) The warning within

As we discussed about the assurance within, where the Holy Spirit releases peace and joy through His inner witness about decisions and situations we are considering, there could also be a warning within, through the inner witness. This could come as impressions that give a tightness, an uneasy feeling within, a lack of peace or joy, a sense that something is not right, something is amiss, etc. We need to pay attention to these and take caution or preventive action.

Paul, trouble awaits in Jerusalem.

Consider for example what the apostle Paul shared with the leaders from Ephesus about his upcoming trip to Jerusalem.

Acts 20:22,23

[22] And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,

[23] except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

The apostle Paul said that the Holy Spirit was testifying to him that he was going to face imprisonment (chains) and hardships (tribulations). The word "testifies" in the Greek means "to attest or protest earnestly, to charge, to affirm." Notice carefully that what the Holy Spirit was testifying to Paul made Paul feel "*bound in the spirit*," tied up or constrained in his spirit. The Holy Spirit's testifying produced a feeling or sensation of discomfort in Paul's spirit. This was a warning given to Paul by the Holy Spirit through the inner witness. Although the Holy Spirit warned him of impending danger, the apostle Paul chose to go ahead to Jerusalem and face what he had to face.

In a similar way, when we are interacting with people, making day-to-day decisions big or small, we may receive warnings within us in our spirit through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. Maybe you are about to sign a contract and you feel uneasy in your spirit. Then pause. Wait. Take time to determine what the Lord is warning you about. Maybe you should not sign or maybe there are things in the contract that need to be revised before you sign.

Train your spirit to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit

In this chapter, we have tried to explain one of the ways the Holy Spirit leads us, which is through His inner witness. The key here is for us to be sensitive in our spirit (heart) to the Holy Spirit.

Here are ways to develop sensitivity of spirit. These are practices we already know but should stay with consistently.

- Daily time with God in worship, Word and prayer.
- Maintain constant communion with God as you go through the day.

- Praying a lot in tongues.
- Stillness. Learn to maintain a quiet and calm spirit. Learn to rest.
- Pressing in—extra time in worship, prayer, fasting and God's Word.
- Spend time with others who are sensitive to God.

Checking and confirming the witness within

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, other than the written Scriptures, which must be rightly divided (correctly interpreted and applied), all other expressions of the inner witness have to be checked and confirmed before being acted upon.

The reason we need to test the inner witness is because we could get confused with our own feelings, thoughts and ideas. Also, there could be times when there are demonic ideas and suggestions coming into our minds. Remember what happened to Peter in Matthew 16. One moment, he spoke by revelation from the Father (Matthew 16:16,17), and shortly after, Jesus rebuked the devil who was "speaking" through Peter (Matthew 16:22,23).

Here are simple tests to check what you are receiving through the inner witness.

1) Ensure it is aligned to the written Scripture.
   The Holy Spirit will never give you an inner witness that contradicts His Word. The Spirit and the Word agree (1 John 5:7).

2) Ensure that your natural emotions and affections are kept subject to the Spirit.

If you have personal emotions or affections involved, be doubly cautious. For example, in the case where a young man and a young woman are emotionally involved, hoping to get married, it would be quite difficult to distinguish the inner witness of the Holy Spirit from their own emotions. Hence, we strongly encourage that you try to be very objective in such situations.

3) Ensure that the leading glorifies Jesus Christ and not self or any other thing in your life.
4) See if it is aligned to the plan and purpose of God for your life.
5) Are there other confirmations to the inner witness?
6) Consider the risk involved.

The greater the risk, the more you would need to test and validate before stepping out. For example, if the prompting is to call a friend and pray with them, there is not much risk involved. Even if you were mistaken, the friend would be happy you called. However, if it was a matter of signing an important contract, you should be careful and do all the needed checks and validate with other ways God speaks about the matter.

7) Test the waters.

If you sense the Spirit leading you in a certain way, whenever possible, take small steps to test and validate what you are hearing. As you are testing things, if the leading within you continues and there are confirmations, then you proceed further. As an example, let's say you feel a prompting in your spirit to start a certain kind of business, and that you should enlist the involvement of certain people, let's say three particular people, to join you in this venture. So, you pray over this matter for some time, and the inner witness is still there. You still feel the prompting. Your next step in "testing the waters" is to speak to

these three people. So, you do your preparation. You meet with the first person and share your idea. The person takes some time and then comes back saying that they are ready to join you. Then you share the idea with the other two people as well. They also take their time and they come back saying that they are ready to join you. You have tested the waters so far and things are looking good. The inner witness in your spirit is strong and clear. There is peace in your heart about this so far. You can proceed further with the next steps. If any one of them or all three of them came back and said that they were not ready to join you, then you would need to go back to God and ask Him about what you felt in your spirit. Should you proceed or stop or just pause and then resume later? What changes do you need to make?

Reflection



We covered eight ways in which the inner witness of the Holy Spirit comes to us. Review these and see if you have already experienced one or more of these. Share or write down one or two experiences where you have recognized the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

1) Quickening of Scripture
2) The assurance within
3) The desire within
4) The knowing within
5) The prompting within
6) The stirring within
7) The foreknowledge within
8) The warning within

5
The Voice of the Holy Spirit

The God of the Bible is a God who speaks to His people. The Holy Spirit speaks to us even today. Throughout the Bible, we see men and women who heard the voice of God. There are many instances where we read that the Holy Spirit spoke to an individual or a group of people.

Consider a few instances recorded for us in Scripture.

Ezekiel 3:24
Then the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and spoke with me and said to me: "Go, shut yourself inside your house.

Ezekiel 11:5
Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said to me, "Speak! 'Thus says the Lord: "Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind.

Acts 8:29
Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

Acts 10:19
While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you.

Acts 13:2
As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

We see that the Holy Spirit spoke something specific in all these verses. However, it is not stated how the Spirit spoke.

The voice of the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit speaking, is much stronger that the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. The inner witness is the most common way in which we receive the leading of the Holy Spirit. As we stated in the previous chapter, the inner witness comes to us through conviction, knowing, assurance, impressions, feelings and sensations that the Holy Spirit gives to us in our spirit. The voice of the Spirit is words released into our spirit and comes in a much stronger, clearer, and in some cases, louder manner. The voice of the Spirit is often (but not always) more instructive and directive.

In both—through the inner witness of the Spirit and the voice of the Spirit—the Holy Spirit is speaking and communicating a message to us. The inner witness of the Spirit comes as **impressions** in our spirit. The voice of the Spirit comes as **words** released in our spirit.

Often, the voice of the Holy Spirit will be coupled with other expressions such as visions, dreams or prophecy or other gifts of the Spirit. We must keep this in mind although, in this chapter, we discuss only the voice of the Spirit.

To help us understand, the voice of the Holy Spirit can be broadly classified into the following:

1) The inner voice
2) The audible voice
3) The voice of the Spirit in prophecy
4) The collective witness to the Holy Spirit's leading

1) The inner voice of the Holy Spirit

The inner voice of the Holy Spirit is God speaking clearly to our spirit. We do not hear a sound, but we receive the message clearly. It is like words (information, knowledge) coming into

our spirit without the medium of sound. The inner voice often comes as a line or sentences of instruction or direction from the Lord.

While we cannot state this with absolute certainty, it is possible that in the Scriptures quoted above, in the case of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:24; Ezekiel 11:5), in the case of Philip (Acts 8:29) and in the case of Peter (Acts 10:19), the Spirit spoke to them through the inner voice. (We will not debate about this.) It could also be that when the prophets said, "*the word of the Lord came to me*," that this could have, in some cases, come through the inner voice of the Holy Spirit.

In the previous chapter, I shared one instance under "**The stirring within**" where along with a strong stirring, there was the inner voice clearly directing me to do something. It was a simple instruction but it opened a door of ministry for the next four years. I shared this under "**August 1982: Preaching at RTMC, Bangalore**."

I take the liberty here to share a few more examples of the inner voice of the Holy Spirit. Being led by the Holy Spirit is exciting, whether He speaks to us through the inner witness or the inner voice.

January 1989: Starting "Believers Fellowship Meetings" in Manipal

In July of 1986, I went to Manipal, India to start my undergraduate studies in engineering at Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT). I knew that I was there for a purpose that was bigger than my education and getting my bachelor's degree. So, I kept praying and asking God as to what He wanted me to do in that place and how I could impact and influence my fellow students for His Kingdom. In the first year (1986-1987), I had the joy of meeting

some believers and sharing with them about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some of them were filled with the Spirit and started to speak with other tongues. In the second year in college (1987-1988), I conducted a few meetings, one at Hotel Valley View and one at the MIT auditorium as a way of reaching out to students. It was January of 1989, when in my third year (1988-1989), I was at home in Bangalore, ready to head back to Manipal in a few days. I was earnestly praying in the Spirit—praying in tongues and asking God what He wanted me to do in Manipal. I just had three more semesters of study there and really wanted to make a difference in that place before I left. During this time of prayer, I received the inner voice of the Holy Spirit along with a spiritual vision (visual) of what I was to do. The instruction was clear. I was to go to the hotel (Hotel Valley View), rent their seminar hall every Saturday and hold, "Believers Fellowship Meetings." These meetings will have a time of praise and worship, followed by solid teaching from the Word of God, closing with prayer and ministry. I was to invite students to come. I was to make whatever resources I had (Christian books, cassette tapes) available to them so that they could use them to grow spiritually. I would leave an offering box at the back of the hall and people could contribute toward the expenses as they desired. This was to be a step of faith. So, once I was back in Manipal, I got the arrangements with the hotel in place, and held the first Believers Fellowship Meeting on Thursday, January 26, 1989, since this was a public holiday. I announced at this meeting that from Saturday, January 28, 1989, we would hold regular meetings every Saturday at the hotel. This was the beginning of what later became the "Manipal Believers Fellowship," a powerful Spirit-filled, Word-based student fellowship. I graduated and left Manipal by April of 1990. Subsequent leaders, Davis Johnraj and other students continued the fellowship, which in time grew to over 200+ students gathering every weekend at these meetings.

The lives of many hundreds of students were ministered to in the years that followed. It began with a leading of the Holy Spirit that came through the inner voice.

November 22, 1993: The letter to Amy

In May 1993, I felt strongly in my spirit about praying to find my spouse. In fact, on May 4, 1993, I wrote down in my notebook (which I still have), the qualities I'd like to see in my future wife. I turned the page and wrote down what I would be able to bring to my wife. I prayed over this. During that season, I was living in New Jersey, in the US, and I used to write letters to a few of the leaders who were leading the student fellowship (Manipal Believers Fellowship, MBF) in Manipal. My goal was to encourage them and cheer them on in the work they were doing. Among other leaders, I had written about four letters to Amy Siew, who was a student in the medical college. November 22, 1993, I had got back from my college to my little room where I was staying. I spent that afternoon praying in tongues. During that time, there was the inner voice of the Spirit, "Write to Amy and ask her if she would be willing to consider the possibility of marrying you." I knew in the natural this was completely absurd. Amy and I had never met each other until that time. Other than a few things we knew about each other, we had nothing else to go with. Several other issues also went through my mind. I was very aware that if this were wrong, I could be in big trouble with the leaders and the fellowship at MBF. Further, Amy is Malaysian Chinese. I am Indian. How would our families respond? And yet, along with the inner voice of the Spirit, there was the courage to write the letter. I prayed a simple prayer, "Lord, please prepare Amy to receive this letter." I then wrote the letter without saying, "Thus says the Lord," and without any form of compulsion, coercion or obligation. Just wanted Amy to be free to make her decision. That same day, November 22, 1993, in Manipal,

when Amy was having tea and snacks with a friend of hers, the friend said to Amy, "Amy, consider this hypothetical situation. What would you say if Ashish asked you to marry him?" God had already prepared Amy and got her thinking. Ten days later, Amy received my letter. We proceeded from there slowly, but cautiously. Amy wrote back saying that before she could say, "Yes," it was important to seek the Lord and have Him speak to her also while we got to know each other. For both of us, it was important that we had the support and approval of our parents. At the right time, when we shared this with our parents, they were supportive. Amy and I met for the first time in August 1994 and were later married in May 1995. We still have the letters we had written. The Lord led us through the inner voice of His Spirit, and we proceeded with His grace and wisdom. [I share this incident with some caution. Please do not "copy" this unless you know the Lord is speaking.]

February 2001: Starting APC Bangalore

As a family, we moved from Chicago to Bangalore in December 2000. We came with the intent of planting a church in Bangalore city and from Bangalore, serving across the nation. We had been preparing for the move to Bangalore for about a year. We initially had plans of having a big meeting that would hopefully see many hundreds saved and then, start a church with these new believers. However, things did not go as we had planned. We did not have the people or resources to do something on that scale at that time. Nevertheless, we were determined to go ahead. During the month of January 2001, I went around looking for halls and venues and found it difficult to finalize on any. I was feeling a little discouraged. So, one day, as I was talking to God about this, I heard the inner voice of the Holy Spirit simply say this, "Start with what you have." This may seem like a very simple statement, but it is the guidance I really needed. I began to think

about what I did have. At that time, we were staying with my father at his house in RT Nagar, Bangalore. So, I asked my father if it would be alright to start the church in the living room of his house. He readily agreed. So, we held the first service on Sunday, February 18, 2001, in the living room of my father's house and got APC started. It has been a wonderful journey since then, and we look ahead to all that lies ahead. A simple instruction through His inner voice helped guide us in this situation.

September 2012: Starting APC Bangalore East (Whitefield)

In June / July of 2012, one of our young men met with a motorcycle accident and was admitted in Manipal Hospital, Bangalore. I had gone to visit him in the hospital. Some of the young men were there at the hospital. Right there in the hospital, that late afternoon, I heard the inner voice of the Holy Spirit say this, "What are you doing with these young men at APC? Start APC East in Whitefield with them and train them up for ministry." It was quite an unusual moment for such an instruction—in a hospital, when visiting someone who was unwell, receiving an instruction to step out and do a new church plant. Nevertheless, after spending some time with the young man who had been injured, with the other young men around, I spoke out what we were going to do. Now, I did not say, "God spoke to me that all of you should do this ..." etc. I believe if God spoke to me, and He wants them as part of it, God will also put it in their hearts, and we will be able to flow together. So, I simply said something like this, "Hey guys, we're going to start APC East in Whitefield, and all of you are going to be the team that starts the church." It was an amazing moment. Without any hesitation, all of them said, "Yes." They were ready to take this up. So, we got ourselves organized, found a hall and launched APC Bangalore East (Whitefield) in September 2012. Many of

these young people have been built, and moved on to other parts of the world, serving God where He has planted them. APC East continues to be a thriving local congregation.

While the few examples I have shared have to do with local church ministry, the Holy Spirit will speak to us about all areas of life. During the season when I was running the technology business, the Holy Spirit has guided me through His inner voice on what markets to focus on for the company, how to turn difficult situations around and so on. God will guide us through the inner voice in all matters of life that we go to Him for and seek His guidance.

2) The audible voice of the Holy Spirit

We see in Scripture that there is the audible voice of the Holy Spirit. The voice of the Spirit comes audibly to the person He is speaking to. They hear His voice as though it was a natural voice, but others around them do not hear the audible voice. We see several examples of this in the Bible. Young Samuel heard the audible voice of the Lord and thought it was Eli calling him. All three times Samuel heard an audible voice, but Eli did not (1 Samuel 3). Many of the experiences of the prophets had to do with an audible voice of God. Ezekiel often stated, *"...I heard a voice of One speaking*" (Ezekiel 1:28). *"I heard Him who spoke to me*" (Ezekiel 2:2).

God can speak to us this way, although it does not appear to be as common as the inner witness or the inner voice. God can do as He pleases, and so He can and will speak with the audible voice of the Holy Spirit as often as He chooses. We must remain open to hearing the audible voice of the Holy Spirit.

3) The voice of the Holy Spirit in prophecy

This is an important way the Holy Spirit speaks and needs to be addressed in greater detail. So, we cover this later, separately in another chapter.

4) The collective witness to the Holy Spirit's leading

We also have examples of the Holy Spirit speaking to a group of people. While His voice could have come through the voice of prophecy or through the inner voice or even the inner witness—the important factor is that multiple people attested to hearing the Holy Spirit say the same thing. This brought a collective witness to what the Holy Spirit was speaking and hence, they could follow the Lord confidently.

This would be important in leadership teams and other situations, where people are working as teams, that there is a collective witness to what the Spirit is saying. The Holy Spirit may speak to one individual and this person presents it to the others in the team to see if the Spirit bears witness to them as well. Or the Holy Spirit may speak simultaneously to several members in the team saying the same thing to each one. They all attest to what they are hearing from the Spirit, and the team can in agreement move forward. I believe this is key to having ministry teams, leadership teams and local churches who are in one accord. When all are attuned to the Holy Spirit and are walking in submission to one another, we can have a people who truly walk in the unity of the Spirit in one accord.

Consider the following examples in the book of Acts.

Collective witness among leaders at Antioch

Acts 13:1-3

[1] Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene,

Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
[2] As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
[3] Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

There were five leaders who were in prayer, fasting and ministering to the Lord together and the Holy Spirit spoke. He gave a clear instruction on what to do, and they acted on it without a doubt.

Collective witness at the first council in Jerusalem

Acts 15:28
For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

Acts 15 records the first Council in Jerusalem where the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, along with Paul and Barnabas, came together to discuss whether Gentile believers had to keep Jewish customs and traditions. Although we do not see any mention of prophecy or other supernatural expression, at the end of the deliberations, the leaders issued their statement as being good to the Holy Spirit and to us. They were in agreement and they also were convinced that this was what the Holy Spirit was saying to the Church. There was collective witness to the decision being made.

Collective witness among Paul's missions team

Acts 16:6-10
[6] Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.
[7] After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.
[8] So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

[9] And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." [10] Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

We see how the Holy Spirit was directing the apostle Paul and his team. We do not know how exactly they determined that the Holy Spirit was not permitting them to go to one place and instead, directing them in another direction. But the team had a collective witness to the Spirit's leading. Later when Paul had a vision directing them into Macedonia, the entire team moved together in agreement. This once again indicates that they all bore witness to the leading of the Spirit and moved together.

Testing all things

While hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit is exciting, we must be even more cautious in this area. Satan and his demons are deceivers and imitators. They can pretend to speak as though it were God and thus, lead believers astray. Hence, we must test what we are hearing and see if it is from God or from evil spirits (1 John 4:1-4). The tests that we have outlined in the earlier chapter for testing the inner witness hold good here as well for us to test the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God speaks and we must listen to Him. But be aware that there is an enemy who tries to imitate the Spirit to lead God's people astray.

Reflection

1) Explain what you have understood as the main difference between the inner witness of the Spirit and the voice of the Spirit.
2) Explain the difference between the inner voice of the Spirit and the audible voice of the Holy Spirit.

3) Think of some practical scenarios in church life as well as in day-to-day situations where the collective witness to the Holy Spirit's leading can be very useful to practice.

6
Gifts of the Holy Spirit

While the gifts of the Spirit are ways in which the Holy Spirit works through us to minister to others, God can use the gifts to speak to us personally and guide us into His plans and purposes.

We present brief comments on some of these gifts of the Spirit and how they can serve to guide us. Please keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive description. God is infinite and will work in new and creative ways, even through the gifts of the Spirit. [For a more detailed explanation on the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, please see the free APC book, "**Gifts of the Holy Spirit"** available as a free download at **apcwo.org/books.**]

Personal use of tongues and interpretation

1 Corinthians 14:2
For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him;* however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

When we pray in tongues, we are speaking mysteries, things which our own mind knows nothing about. We are praying with the information given to us by the Holy Spirit. He knows all things. The mysteries we speak or pray in tongues are mysteries to us, but not mysteries to God. So, we are not praying these mysteries to God for His benefit since there is nothing hidden from God. The mysteries we pray or speak in tongues are for our benefit.

When we interpret what is spoken in tongues, we gain an understanding of the mysteries that were spoken or prayed over. In a public congregational setting, the interpretation of

tongues must be done in such a manner that it can be heard so that it benefits everyone who is present. However, in personal use, the interpretation would benefit just the one praying in tongues. Hence, it does not always have to be done loudly. The interpretation can come while you are praying in tongues as you get an understanding of what you are praying. The mysteries that you are praying now come to your understanding.

Very often when I am praying over a certain matter, over decisions that need to be made or over problems that need to be solved, etc., I take time to pray in tongues while keeping my spirit quiet and attentive to hear from God. There is no set duration on how much or how long one has to pray in order to hear from God or to know the mind of God. You just have to pray until you know you have heard from God on the matter. Some situations can go over extended periods of time, so you continue to pray in the Spirit over this duration receiving insights from God, knowing the mind of God for each step of the way. The solutions to the problems we are facing, the decisions that need to be made, etc. may be a "mystery" at that moment. But as we pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit enables us to pray these mysteries. We are actually praying God's answers to those situations. Hence, our spirit begins to understand those mysteries. We then gain insight into what we are to do, the solutions we need, and the decisions to be made. So, praying in tongues and receiving an understanding of what you are praying for becomes another way by which you receive the mind of God and thereby, God's guidance on various matters that you pray about in the Spirit.

When you are praying in tongues, God can also use other ways to communicate His guidance, for example, the quickened Word, inner voice, visions, etc. So, we must remain attentive to these as well.

Words of knowledge

The gift of the word of knowledge reveals something in the present or from the past. The Holy Spirit can give us words of knowledge that can help us in the decision-making process and take us along the path God wants us to go. God can release His guidance to us using words of knowledge. Sometimes, it can come as a "reminder"— this is what happened in the past, therefore, now take this course of action. Sometimes, it can come as an unveiling of something that someone is trying to hide and therefore, you know what decision to make even though they are covering up matters. Sometimes, it can come as things God has orchestrated and you are to just walk into it.

Consider this situation here.

Mark 11:1-9

1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples;
2 and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it*.
3 And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."
4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.
5 But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"
6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.
7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.
8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road.
9 Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna!
'Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord!'

As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, He received a word of knowledge and He sent two of His disciples with details of what the Father had already orchestrated and kept ready for Him. They found the colt and brought it to Jesus for Him to ride on as He entered Jerusalem. By receiving and acting on the word of knowledge, Jesus was doing the will of the Father as well as fulfilling prophecy (Zechariah 9:9).

Words of wisdom

A gift of the word of wisdom is a revelation of the mind, will and purpose of God and helps us especially concerning decisions to be made and the course of action to be taken for the future. God can guide us by giving us a word of wisdom. For instance, God can give you a word of wisdom to know whom to go and meet to get a problem solved. He could give you a word of wisdom about which option, out of the many, to choose. You can receive a word of wisdom about a future timing in which things are going to change and therefore, get yourself ready for that moment up ahead. These are just a few examples of how the Holy Spirit, through a word of wisdom, can release God's guidance to us.

Discerning of spirits

The gift of the discerning of spirits helps us see into the spiritual realm and into the hearts of people. Through the gift of the discerning of spirits, God can guide you to make decisions that will protect you, your organization, etc. Sometimes, people may not understand your choices, but you are seeing something, which they are not seeing, through the gift of the discerning of spirits, based on which you are making your decisions.

The well-meaning disciple

Consider this instance when Jesus was preparing His disciples for His crucifixion and ascension. Peter, like a well-meaning disciple, spoke up and said that this would not happen to Jesus. In the natural, this seemed to be a very noble thing to care for your Master and for His well-being. The Lord Jesus, however, saw past the surface to what was motivating Peter to make those statements. He recognized satan as the source and rebuked him. He refused to go along with the suggestions Peter made.

Matthew 16:21-23

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Washing the heel that would knock you

In John Chapter 13, as Jesus prepared to wash the feet of His disciples, He was aware that one of them would betray Him. In fact, Jesus knew who would betray Him. He was troubled, disturbed or agitated in His spirit. Though this disciple acted like all the other disciples, Jesus knew that this was the man who would "lift up his heel," i.e., betray Jesus. Jesus was acutely aware of what was going on in this disciple's heart and in the spirit realm. In fact, He knew the moment satan made a move into Judas Iscariot. All this prepared Jesus for the events that would unfold and take Him to the cross to be crucified. So, the fact that one of His own would betray Him did not come as a surprise.

John 13:11,18,21,27

[11] For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

[18] "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'

[21] When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

[27] Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

In a similar way, the Holy Spirit can warn, alert and prepare us so that we know ahead of time how things will unfold and what course of action we must take.

In this chapter, we have outlined some of the ways the Holy Spirit can use the gifts of the Spirit to impart guidance and direction to us. There are many other ways through which the Spirit of God can work, and we must remain open to the diversity of His manifestations and operations.

Reflection

1) When you pray in tongues about a particular matter where you are seeking God's guidance and direction, have you personally experienced receiving an understanding of what you have been praying that helped you in making a decision? Review how and what happened.
2) If you have experienced receiving God's guidance through a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom or through the gift of the discerning of spirits, review how and what happened. If you have not, ask the Holy Spirit to work through your life in these ways and ask Him to help you be sensitive to Him.

7
Dreams and Visions

We are in the hour when God is pouring out His Holy Spirit. This outpouring of this Spirit is characterized by dreams, visions and prophecies. We should be open to such activities of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:17,18
17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

Dreams

Dreams can have three different sources. Some of our dreams can be because of things our mind has been preoccupied with (Ecclesiastes 5:3). Some of our dreams can be God speaking to us. Some of our dreams could be demonic interference in our sleep. When we have bad dreams, whether they are from our own mind or demonic, we just reject them and do not permit those dreams to affect us.

God can speak to us through dreams.

Psalm 16:7
I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel;
My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

God gives us His counsel and instructs us in the night seasons.

Job 33:14-18
[14] For God may speak in one way, or in another,
***Yet man* does not perceive it.**
[15] In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
While slumbering on their beds,
[16] Then He opens the ears of men,
And seals their instruction.
[17] In order to turn man *from his* deed,
And conceal pride from man,
[18] He keeps back his soul from the Pit,
And his life from perishing by the sword.

The passage from Job 33 is interesting. It refers to God speaking to people through dreams. While people are asleep, He opens their ears causing them to hear. This of course is referring to spiritual ears, not our natural ears. He imparts His instruction, guidance and direction to us through dreams and attempts to keep us from error.

Dreams (sometimes also referred to as night visions) from God can serve different purposes.

God speaks through dreams to...

1) **Meet and encounter us.** (Jacob in Genesis 28:12; Solomon in 1 Kings 3:5-15)
2) **Encourage us.** (Paul at Corinth, Acts 18:9-11)
3) **Instruct and teach us.** (Job 33:14-18; Psalm 16:7; Joseph in Matthew 1:20)
4) **Direct and guide us.** (Gideon in Judges 7:13-15; Joseph in Matthew 2:19-21; Jacob in Genesis 46:1-4; Paul called into Macedonia, Acts 16:9)
5) **Reveal future events.** (Joseph in Genesis 37:5-10; the Baker and Butler in Genesis 40:5-19; Pharaoh in Genesis 41:1-10; Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2; Daniel 4; Daniel in Daniel 7)

6) **Reveal secret things to us.** (Jacob in Genesis 31:10-13; Daniel in Daniel 2:19)
7) **Correct and realign us.** (Abimelech in Genesis 20:3-6; Job 33:14-18)
8) **Alert and warn us.** (Laban in Genesis 31:24; Wise men in Matthew 2:12; Joseph in Matthew 2:13,22,23; Pilate's wife in Matthew 27:19)

Note: We have included above, where in some cases, it is recorded that the person saw a vision at night (or visions of the night). This could be a dream in which they saw a vision, or a vision they saw at night.

We must be open to receiving dreams from God.

Before going to sleep, you can pray and ask God to speak to you through dreams and visions at night. Consecrate your mind and the activity of your mind when you are asleep to the Lord.

While some dreams may be literal and easy to understand, often, dreams are figurative (having symbols) and need to be interpreted. Pray and ask God to give you an understanding of the dream.

Journal your dreams so that you can always go back and review what God has been speaking to you. I have personally been journaling my dreams since 2007. It is amazing to be able to look back and see the various dreams, and how these have helped along the way in bringing guidance, in alerting to danger or preparing in advance for events that were going to happen. God still speaks through dreams!

Visions

A simple and basic difference between dreams and visions is that dreams happen when one is asleep, and visions happen

when one is awake. In both dreams and visions, we are "seeing" something and receiving a message from God through the means of a visual, something that is pictorial, something that we see.

The inner witness comes through impressions—what we feel.

The inner voice comes through words—what we hear.

Visions come through visuals—what we see.

We must be open to God speaking to us through visions because we see this in the Bible.

There are numerous examples in the Bible of people seeing visions. Abraham (Genesis 15:1-5), Jacob (Genesis 46:1-4), Balaam (Numbers 24:2-9,15-25), Samuel (1 Samuel 3:15) and many others. Typically, in the Old Testament, the prophets who saw visions were called **seers** (2 Chronicles 9:29).

In a vision, you can see angels (Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:11-22; Luke 24:23; Acts 10:3), see into the spiritual realm (2 Kings 2:12; 2 Kings 6:17), see into other locations in the natural realm (2 Kings 5:26), see into heaven (Isaiah 6:1-4; Acts 7:55,56). Others around you may not see what you see (Daniel 10:1,7).

God can give us visions to guide and direct us. We see in the book of Acts, God using different kinds of visions to provide guidance and direction to His people. God can and does still speak to His people through visions.

There are different kinds of visions that we see in Scripture that we have broadly categorized as follows. Here again, we do not seek to put God in a box or confine His works to only these. The following are for our learning so that we can receive from God. We must always remain open to much more. Also, keep in mind that you can have a combination of these experiences at any point.

Spiritual vision

This is the most common for every believer, where God reveals things to us and we see with the eyes of our spirit. We may see pictures or visuals that are literal or symbolic. What God reveals to us in picture form could include guidance and direction on what God wants us to do.

Consider a few examples in the book of Acts.

Ananias and Saul

God directed Ananias to go to Saul in a vision. God also revealed to Saul in a vision about Ananias coming to him. This must have been "like a movie" when they saw this happening, and then later, they did what they saw.

Acts 9:10-12
10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias."
And he said, "Here I am, Lord."
11 So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.
12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

A man of Macedonia

Acts 16:9,10
9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

This could have been a dream at night or a vision that Paul saw at night. Without getting into the technicalities, Paul saw a visual where a man from Macedonia was calling them to come

over and help the people there. Through this vision, Paul and his team were led to take the Gospel into Macedonia and its surrounding regions.

April 2014: Riding two horses

While God has spoken often in spiritual visions, I would like to share this one incident because of its significance. From January 2001, I had been carrying dual responsibilities of leading a technology business as well as leading All Peoples Church in Bangalore. This was indeed challenging, although a rewarding experience, and I enjoyed developing and providing technology solutions to our customers. However, given the increasing responsibilities in the ministry, I knew at some point I would have to make this transition. In December 2010, as I updated my life plan, I had put down 2015 as the year that this transition was likely to happen. So, we were gradually preparing for this. On March 31, 2014, I had a heart attack, where God graciously saved my life. I would have been gone if it were not for the grace of God and timely medical intervention. Of course, there was a lot of concern as we explored all possible causes for something like this happening. The stress of the dual responsibility I was carrying seemed to have a big part in this. I remember during my time of recovery at the hospital, lying on the bed and talking to God as to what I should do now. At that moment, I had a vision, a picture of a man straddled and trying to ride on two horses at the same time. I got the message. It was time for me to get off one and stay on just one of the horses. While emotionally it was not easy, I had to accept and make the change and focus on God's primary assignment.

Trance

In a trance, the person temporarily loses consciousness of the natural world while seeing a spiritual vision or something in the spiritual realm.

The Lord directed Peter to take the Gospel to the Gentiles for the first time—to the house of Cornelius—through a trance.

Acts 10:9-16

9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.
10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance
11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.
12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.
13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."
14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."
15 And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."
16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Open vision

This is where you don't see pictures or visuals but see clearly in the spiritual realm. You see what is currently happening in the spiritual realm. At the same time, you are very aware of the natural world around you.

The transfiguration

Peter, James and John saw an open vision of Jesus transfigured along with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. They saw what was happening in the spiritual realm at that time.

Matthew 17:1-6

1 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

[2] and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.
[3] And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.
[4] Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
[5] While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"
[6] And when the disciples heard *it,* they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

Cornelius

Acts 10:1-6
[1] There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,
[2] a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.
[3] About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"
[4] And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.
[5] Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter.
[6] He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."

In an open vision, Cornelius saw an angel of God coming, speaking to him and giving him instructions on what to do.

Travelling in visions

This is where you are travelling and going places in the natural world or spiritual world in visions. Your spirit, soul and body are in one place, but you are "travelling" in a vision geographically and as well as in time—into the past or into the future.

Many of Prophet Ezekiel's experiences were like this (Ezekiel 8:3; Ezekiel 11:24; Ezekiel 40:2; Ezekiel 43:3).

Daniel was also transported in a vision and saw what was going to happen in the future (Daniel 8).

Transported in spirit

This is where your spirit leaves the body and travels and observes things in the natural and spiritual world.

Paul was caught up to the third heavens (2 Corinthians 12:1-3). John was caught up to heaven (Revelation 4:1,2).

Be open to receiving dreams and visions

As we see in Scripture, dreams and visions are one of the ways God speaks and often uses it to direct us. So, we must be open and receptive to God speaking to us in this manner. Spiritual vision is the most common, which all of us as believers experience often. We must be attentive to these as the Holy Spirit communicates to us through visions.

Reflection



1) Recall a dream where you know God was speaking to you. How did you recognize that this was a dream from God? What did you do about that dream? Did it help you in any way?
2) Have you experienced what we have called a "spiritual vision"? How did you know this was from God? How did it help you in your decision making?

8

Prophecies

Prophecy is speaking a message from God inspired by the Holy Spirit. In Scripture, we see prophetic ministry expressed in both the Old and New Testaments.

In the New Testament, prophecy is one of the gifts of the Spirit available for all believers. The gift of prophecy is used to bring edification, exhortation and comfort to people (1 Corinthians 14:3). There are some who are called as prophets in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11).

1 Corinthians 14:3
But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

As believers, we are not to despise prophecies. Yet, we must test all prophecies; hold on to what is good and discard (leave aside) what is not of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:20,21
[20] Do not despise prophecies.
[21] Test all things; hold fast what is good.

Test the source of the inspiration. Is the person truly speaking from God or from their own thoughts or is it from a demonic source?

Test the validity of the message given in prophecy. Is the message in harmony with written Scripture? Is the message exalting Jesus Christ? Does the Holy Spirit witness in my spirit to the prophecy? Is this prophecy aligned to what God has spoken to me through other ways?

Understand the timing of the prophecy. A true prophetic word must be acted upon at the right time. Understanding the timing for the execution of the prophecy is equally important as understanding the prophecy itself.

There are several ways in which God can use prophecy to bring His guidance to us.

Prophetic confirmation

God can use prophecy to bring confirmation of what He has been speaking to us. We have seen this happen on numerous occasions. Someone may have been praying about something or preparing to make a certain decision or go down a certain course in their life. Someone, who has no idea of these matters, brings a word of prophecy, speaking directly about that area of their life, thus confirming the direction in which they were proceeding.

Prophetic direction

God can use prophecy to show us what He wants us to do. Prophecy could come, instructing us to do a certain thing or go to a certain place and engage in a certain type of activity.

Prophetic revelation

Many times, people may not be aware of the potential God has placed within them. They may not be aware of the call of God or the plans of God for their lives. Through prophecy, God can awaken what may be dormant or left unrecognized in them. Through prophecy, God can unveil plans and purposes that He has for them in their future. God can use prophecy to reveal things about the future so that we can prepare ourselves.

We wish to reiterate with a lot of emphasis that all prophecy must be tested before being accepted.

Don't go around seeking for prophecies. Let God speak to you at the time and through whom He chooses.

May 1993: Prophecy from a complete stranger

One of the most notable prophecies that I've personally received was in May 1993, where Kevin Van Der Westhuizen, known for his prophetic ministry, was ministering at a Spiritual Skills Course in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As Kevin came to the end of his second session with us, when he had been instructing us about the prophetic, he came up to me to pray for me and then began prophesying over my life. He began to say, "Lord, You have been preparing him for things to come. You are using the engineering abilities and the things You are planting in him for the Kingdom of God. You set things in motion right now; in Your realm, You are setting up divine contacts. You are setting up people that he will meet. Things are happening on his behalf and You are for him. You are opening the way. You are opening the door. You are the One who is going to set this whole thing in motion for his life. Even though he is here, he is here for a season. He is here for a period. There are things that are happening here, but there is coming a day when You will take him back to his people and he will touch the lives of so many. But that will also be for a season, for You have not called this man only to a one people-group, or to a one nation group, but there is a calling that rests on him that You have put upon his life and given to him, for You have called him to the nations. And God, there will be much trouble that You are allowing into his life, You are causing that to be effective and to be opened up before him. God, You will cause him to go to and fro, from place to place, even using the gifting of the natural secular area of his life to touch the lives of many nations …" And so, he went on speaking the same things that were in my heart. Kevin and I had never known each other before. And again, in the next session, Kevin came up to me

and continued, "There have been some struggles, but God has not called you from pit to pit. He has called you from glory to glory. I see ministry written all over your life. I see a call of God on your life ..." He went on to describe the things that the Lord was going to do in the days to come. Kevin's prophecy was a confirmation of many of the things that were already in my heart and truly propelled me forward at that time.

For a more thorough study on the prophetic, please see APC's 'free' book, "**Understanding the Prophetic"** available as a free download at **apcwo.org/books**."

Reflection

1) Have you received a prophecy spoken over you that really helped you? How did you know that this was from God? Share what God did in your life through the prophecy?

9

Angels

We are still living in the Church Age, that is, in the same dispensation (or age, or time in God's calendar) as the Church that was born on the Day of Pentecost. We are closer to the end of the Last Days than the Church at Pentecost, but we are still in the Church Age. Angels were active during Bible times and during the time of the Early Church, and they are still active.

Hebrews 1:14
Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

We see in both the Old and New Testaments, God using angels to send messages to His people to guide them, direct them, reveal what God was planning to do and explain the meaning of the visions they received from God. Angels are still around and God still sends them on assignments for us, His people.

An angel announced to Mary that she would have a Child by the power of the Holy Spirit and who this Child would be (Luke 1:26-38).

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream instructing him to take Mary as his wife and not put her away (Matthew 1:18-24).

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and instructed him to go to Egypt with Mary and the baby Jesus for safety (Matthew 2:13-15).

We see a lot of angelic activity in the Early Church as recorded for us in Acts.

- An angel delivered Peter from prison and instructed him to go preach in the temple (Acts 5:19,20).
- An angel directed Philip to go down to Gaza (Acts 8:26) where Philip preached the Gospel to the man from Ethiopia.
- An angel appeared to Cornelius and directed him to send for Peter to hear the Gospel (Acts 10:1-7).
- An angel released Peter from his chains and took him out of prison (Acts 12:7-10).
- An angel struck Herod and he died (Acts 12:23).
- An angel appeared to Paul while sailing to Rome and assured him that no life would be lost even though the ship was going to be damaged and that Paul would appear before Caesar (Acts 27:22-25).

Angels can appear to us and speak audibly, they can speak to us without being visible or they can speak to us in dreams. Angels can influence our thoughts or put thoughts into our mind (like how demons tempt us). Angels can speak and we hear with the ears of our spirit. Angels minister to us even when they are unseen. You can hear angels even when they are unseen.

Often during times of worship, we can sense (recognize spiritually) the presence of angels ministering amongst us. We thank God for the ministry of His angels amongst us.

While we are open and aware of angelic activity around us, we must keep the following in mind.

- We do not worship angels. We worship the Lord Most High.
- We do not seek after angelic visitations. Our focus remains on Jesus.
- We must discern angelic visitations because we know that satan and his demons can imitate angels of light.

- We ask God for the assistance of His angels according to His Word.
- We speak God's promises declaring what His angels do for us and they respond to the voice of His Word (Psalm 103:20).

Reflection



1) Have you at any time seen or sensed an angel of God around you? Have you at any time experienced supernatural intervention (protection from danger, redirection of what you were going to do, an unusual idea or thought—message—coming to you, which you knew was from God) and felt that this could have been because of an angel of God ministering to you?
2) Pray and ask God to increase dreams, visions, prophecies and angelic encounters for you so that you can hear from Him through these ways as and when He chooses to.

10
Godly Counsel

One important way that God communicates His guidance to us is through godly counsel. God uses His people to speak into our lives and help guide us along the right path for our lives.

Psalm 73:24
You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.

Proverbs 19:21
There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the Lord's counsel—that will stand.

God guides us with His counsel, and this is often brought to us through people who know the ways of God, understand the heart of God and have the wisdom of God.

Now, in general, most of us avoid asking and seeking for godly counsel. However, we need to change that. We need to maintain a humble heart, a heart that is willing to listen and receive godly counsel. Consider these Scriptures from Proverbs that teach us the value and importance of godly counsel.

Proverbs 11:14
Where *there is* no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors *there is* safety.

Receiving the right counsel puts us in a place of safety and strength. We draw from the wisdom, experience and learning of godly people.

Proverbs 15:22
Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

Having a great idea is good but having the right input from the right kind of people will help see that idea become a reality. Often, we need to have input from several people simply because one person will not have all the information that is required.

Proverbs 19:20
Listen to counsel and receive instruction, That you may be wise in your latter days.

We must develop the ability to listen and to receive. Most of us don't like to listen, especially listen to instructions. We have our preconceived notions or prejudices that keep us back from receiving the instruction that will really help us. We incorrectly think—"I don't like to be told what to do," "I don't want someone else controlling me," "I can figure this out myself," "I want to be independent," etc. It takes humility to be willing to listen and receive instruction. If we will humble ourselves and receive instruction, this will prove beneficial in the long run.

Proverbs 20:18
Plans are established by counsel; By wise counsel wage war.

The counsel you receive is like ammunition or weapons that gear you up for battle. Go into the fight armed with counsel from wise people. You can use them at the right time to handle difficult situations and when you face challenges and press through to victory.

Receiving the right counsel

It is also very important from whom you receive counsel. In the context of what we are studying—receiving God's guidance, we must receive counsel from people who have a deep, time-tested and proven walk with God, those who will speak based on the authority of God's Word and in submission to the Holy Spirit.

We must be careful not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

Psalm 1:1
Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

Of course, in other matters of life, we go to experts in those fields (**Example:** legal, finance, career, education, professional matters, etc.). You can receive counsel from these experts, provided they are not instructing you to do anything that is ungodly (displeasing to God).

Be willing to be corrected

One of the hindrances that keeps us from receiving God's guidance through counsel is that we only receive counsel that affirms what we are inclined to do. If there is counsel that corrects us, we have a tendency to not receive it. Consider what the Scriptures teach us.

Proverbs 12:1
Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge,
But he who hates correction *is* stupid.

Proverbs 13:18
Poverty and shame *will come* to him who disdains correction,
But he who regards a rebuke will be honored.

Proverbs 29:1
He who is often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

When asking and seeking godly counsel, be teachable, maintain a humble heart and be willing to be corrected. This means that something you have been considering may not be what God would have you do, and you must be willing to change and align yourself to the ways of God.

Psalm 141:5
Let the righteous strike me; *It shall be* a kindness.
And let him rebuke me; *It shall be* as excellent oil;
Let my head not refuse it.
For still my prayer *is* against the deeds of the wicked.

Proverbs 15:31
The ear that hears the rebukes of life
Will abide among the wise.

Proverbs 15:32
He who disdains instruction despises his own soul,
But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.

Ecclesiastes 7:5
***It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise**
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.

The counsel of godly parents

Proverbs 13:1
A wise son *heeds* his father's instruction,
But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 1:8,9
[8] My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And do not forsake the law of your mother;
[9] For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head,
And chains about your neck.

One of the honorable things we can do is to receive the counsel of our own parents, especially when they are godly parents. Children and young people, according to the Scriptures, hear and receive the counsel and instruction of your parents. They will cause you to walk in honor and esteem among people.

March 1984: Jesus waited 30 years

While I have been blessed through the counsel and help of people around me on many occasions, one that really stands

out happened in March 1984, after I had completed my 10th grade in school. I was so passionate to serve the Lord that I had decided I did not need to study any further but go into full-time ministry. I caused a lot of heartache for my parents at that time, especially for my Dad. However, my Dad did a wonderful thing. He suggested that we get counsel from two Christian leaders, to which I agreed. So first, he took me to meet Dr. Theodore Williams, who used to be the General Secretary of the Indian Evangelical Mission (IEM). I had great respect for Dr. Theodore Williams and used to listen to him regularly on radio and always enjoyed when he preached at Richmond Town Methodist Church (RTMC). Dr. Theodore Williams listened to us patiently, and then he made a simple statement. He said, "Jesus waited 30 years before He started His ministry, so why are you in such a hurry?" What he said made a lot of sense. So, we left from there and then my Dad took me to meet Dr. Thomas Gnanamuthu, who used to serve at RTMC. Dr. Thomas Gnanamuthu listened to us and then he said, "Jesus waited 30 years before He started His ministry, so why are you in such a hurry?" This really amazed me. Two men, counseling me, said the same things. I quickly came into alignment and agreed to continue with my studies. Looking back, I realize that I had zeal without wisdom, and am so grateful for what my Dad did, and for the counsel of these godly leaders that helped steer my life in the direction God would have me go.

Reflection



1) In your own life, has there been a time when you sought godly counsel? How did you go about doing this? Whom did you approach? What was the outcome?
2) Why do people hesitate to ask for godly counsel? How do we overcome these inhibitions?

11
The Renewed Mind

Another important way we receive God's guidance in our lives is using our renewed mind.

We must understand this correctly. We know that the natural mind cannot comprehend the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). We also know that the carnal (flesh-ruled) mind *is enmity against God* (Romans 8:7). We are aware that God's ways and God's thoughts are way higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8,9). So to walk with God, we must not and cannot be ruled by our own natural or carnal minds.

The Scriptures teach us not to lean on (rely, depend, support ourselves with) our own understanding. Instead, we must follow Him in all our ways.

Proverbs 3:5,6
5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Often, we misunderstand this verse to state that we should not use our understanding. That is not what God is teaching us here. We use our understanding, and yet, even as we do so, we rely, trust and depend completely on the Lord to order our steps and establish our ways.

God created our mind. God designed and gave us our intellectual abilities. God instructs us to use our mind.

Proverbs 4:26
Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established.

We are to ponder (weigh, know, make sure, plan carefully, study, watch) the path we are taking so that we can ensure that we are firm, secure, unshakeable and established in what we do.

God has given us our mind and has instructed us on how to use it correctly. The problem with many of us is that we consider our mind as an enemy. If we use our mind the way God teaches us to, then it serves to help us receive God's direction in life situations.

Prove what is good

Romans 12:1,2
[1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.
[2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

As believers, we must not discard the use of our mind. Instead, we must renew our mind and use it as God intends us to. One of the benefits of a renewed mind is that it can recognize what the will of God in any situation is.

We renew and train our mind to think aligned to the ways and thoughts of God. A mind that has been and continues to be aligned to the higher ways and thoughts of God through the Word of God is a renewed mind. We do this with the Word of God.

The renewed mind can prove (Greek '*dokimazo*'), that is, *to test, to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve*, what is the will of God. The picture here is of testing metals to

see if they are genuine or not. So, the renewed mind processes available information and recognizes from all of this what is the genuine—the good, acceptable and perfect—will of God.

Trained to know

Notice what we read in Hebrews 5:12-14 in relation to the Word of God.

Hebrews 5:12-14
12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.
13 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.
14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is,* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

As we mature and stay in God's Word, our senses (organs of perception) are exercised (trained like an athlete) to discern (distinguish, judge) what is right and wrong. Because of our constant use of the Word, we immediately know what is right and wrong.

Solid food refers to the strong meat of the Word. Those who are mature are people who feed on the solid meat of the Word. These people have their senses (organs of perception, judgment) trained to know what is right and wrong.

Consider how other versions render Hebrews 5:14.

- **Contemporary English Version**: Solid food is for mature people who have been trained to know right from wrong.
- **Easy to Read Version:** But solid food is for people who have grown up. From their experience they have learned to see the difference between good and evil.

- **English Standard Version**: But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
- **Good News Translation:** Solid food, on the other hand, is for adults, who through practice are able to distinguish between good and evil.

These indicate that the renewed mind can distinguish what is right and wrong, thus determining what is God's will and what is not.

Find out, understand

We have considered Ephesians 5 in an earlier chapter and will look at this passage again.

Ephesians 5:8-10,17
[8] For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light
[9] (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
[10] finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.
[17] Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

As children of light, we live our lives "**finding out**" (means testing, examining, proving, discerning, to figure out) what is "acceptable" to the Lord. The process of "finding out" means that we make use of our renewed mind. We examine facts, information, we investigate, we ponder, we reason, we test, validate, question, etc., with a renewed mind as we determine what is right and wrong, what is well-pleasing to the Lord.

The word "**acceptable**" is the Greek word '*euarestos*' meaning what is fully agreeable and well-pleasing to the Lord. So, as believers, we are encouraged to be on this pursuit of discovering God's will, what is fully agreeable and well-pleasing to God.

Further on in verse 17, we are instructed not to be "**unwise**" Thayer's Greek Definitions has the following meanings of ('*aphroon*'), the Greek for "unwise," "without reason, senseless, foolish, stupid, without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly." Instead of being unwise, we must understand what God's will is.

The Greek for "**understanding**" is "to put together, to comprehend, to set or join together in the mind, to bring together in a hostile sense, bringing two combatants together" that could imply thinking through seemingly opposing ideas. This verse is teaching us that we do not do away with our mind in understanding God's will and receiving God's guidance.

The ways and thoughts of God

Essentially, the renewed mind brings to bear in any situation the ways and thoughts of God. The renewed mind can use the knowledge and understanding of the ways of God, the thoughts (Word and revelation) of God, and with that process, available information so that we can know what is well-pleasing to God in that situation.

God wants us to live with a renewed mind and make decisions with a renewed mind. His guidance often comes to us using our renewed mind.

The renewed mind goes beyond the natural mind

We do know that there are times God's guidance will require us to set aside constraints created by our rational mind. The renewed mind enables us to walk the ways of God and think aligned to His thoughts. This takes us beyond the realm of the natural mind. The renewed mind can think in terms of miracles and divine possibilities. This is not just wishful thinking but thinking aligned to God's Word and aligned to who God is and what He desires to do at any given moment. The renewed mind

can see that God can take five loaves and two fish and feed over five thousand people. The renewed mind can see that water can be turned to wine, people can walk on water and that all kinds of miracles do happen when God moves amongst us. While this may seem illogical and absurd to the natural rational mind, the renewed mind considers the supernatural to be just normal.

Reflection



1) What do you understand by the term the "renewed mind" that Scripture speaks of in Romans 12:2?
2) How do we go about renewing our mind?
3) How does the renewed mind help us in receiving God's guidance in life situations?

12
Times and Seasons

Ecclesiastes 3:1,11
[1]To everything *there is* a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:
[11] He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

Daniel 2:21
And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.

Our God is a God of plan, order and design. God does not work arbitrarily or randomly. God works with a plan. He unfolds His plans in their appointed time. Time is a frame of reference that we work with. For us, we have past, present and future. God lives outside of time. God lives in the eternal now. He is the great "I AM." He is always in the now. When God works in our realm, He unfolds things according to the '*kairos*' time, which is the right time, the best moment in time (in our frame of reference) for something that God desires to happen.

God often speaks to us about things in our lives ahead of time. He then prepares us over time ('*chronos,*' passage of time, duration or length of time) bringing us to the '*kairos*' moment when He begins to unfold what He spoke to us about. For instance, God spoke in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:15 about sending the Seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent. It was about 4000 years later that Jesus Christ

came into this world. Why was there such a long wait? The only reason the Scriptures reveal is that God sent His Son in the "fullness of time" (Greek '*chronos*') (Galatians 4:4). When the full measure of chronological time had run through and brought us into the '*kairos*' moment, then God sent His Son.

We see God working similarly in other instances. When the '*chronos*' had run its full course, so that the 400-year time ('*chronos*') period that God spoke of was complete (Acts 7:17), at this time ('*kairos*,' Acts 7:20), Moses was born.

Our times (Hebrew '*ē* ' pronounced 'ayth'), referring to "the when" and the "now moments," are in His hands (Psalm 31:15). Understanding this aspect of God's ways is very important to know what God wants us to do. This helps us receive His guidance correctly.

God wants us to be a discerning people—a people who understand times and seasons from His perspective and then act accordingly.

Consider these Scriptures.

1 Chronicles 12:32
of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command;

Like the sons of Issachar, when we understand times and seasons, we will know what we are supposed to do. Hence, in receiving God's guidance, we must pay attention to the times and seasons God has appointed for us.

Ecclesiastes 8:5,6
5 He who keeps his *(the king's or leader's)* **command will experience nothing harmful;**
And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment,

6 Because for every matter there is a time and judgment,
Though the misery of man increases greatly.

Think about what these Scriptures are stating—wise people know the right time to do things because for everything, there is a right time and a right way to do it.

Even if we do the right thing, but if we do it at the wrong time, we could get into trouble. For instance, think about marriage. Marriage is a good thing designed and ordained by God. But if a young person who is barely out of school or college, without a job, no means of livelihood, not mature, etc., "falls in love" and decides to get married, it can cause a lot of trouble. A good thing done at the wrong time can still cause problems.

As we journey through life and seek God's guidance, we must keep in mind that God wants us to walk with an understanding of His times and seasons for our lives.

So, we must look to God, not only for what He would want us to do, but also *when* He would want us to do something. We must prepare ourselves and wait for the right (opportune) time to step into it.

There are many ways through which God will reveal the right time to us. This may come to us through one of the earlier methods (ways) we have discussed, for example, the Scripture, through an inner witness or the inner voice of the Holy Spirit, etc. There are times when we recognize the circumstances—the signs of the times—and then understand that the right time has come.

Let's consider a practical example.

Let's say you are a college student and there is a stirring in your heart to start a business in a certain industry. As you

pray about this and ask for God's guidance, you look for what He is speaking in all the ways (methods) we have covered so far. God may put in your heart to get trained and equipped for this. So, you do your necessary studies. While you may feel the burning passion to launch the business, you feel the time is not yet, and you sense God directing you to work in an organization so that you develop additional skills, build networks and so on. So, all along, God is taking you through the '*chronos*,' which serves as your time of preparation, and He is bringing you to the '*kairos*,' the right time to launch the business idea. So, after these years of incubating your business idea, you feel the time is right. You are ready and prepared, intellectually, emotionally, financially, and professionally to launch the business. Also, at the '*kairos*' moment, God orchestrates things (more on this in the next chapter). He may bring in people who are ready to partner with you. He may bring people who are ready to invest in your business idea. All these things "suddenly" come together at the '*kairos*' moment. So, now you know God is guiding you to launch the business that you have been carrying inside you for several years. Understanding God's times and seasons for your life will help you discern and receive His guidance and direction. [**Please note**: This example is just to illustrate one of the many ways, and not the only way, that God could lead someone to start a business].

December 2000: Returning to India

I had shared earlier on how from my early teenage years, I knew that God wanted me to raise up a strong local church in Bangalore, India and from there, serve the nation. From those early years, I carried this in my heart, continually praying and asking God for His "when"—the right time to step into this. Everything that I was going through, I saw as a preparation toward this important life assignment. Toward the end of 1998, we received God's leading that it was time to prepare to move

back to India. So, we got ourselves ready and moved back in December 2000. We were confident that this was God's timing. This was the right time for us to make this move and step into this assignment.

December 2000: Fulfilling the desire to start a company

Another amazing thing happened as we made the move in December 2000. The company I was working for in Chicago asked if I could work for them from India. I told them that I'd inform them about my decision after I returned to Bangalore. In January 2001, I confirmed that I would work for them, and around this opportunity, I was able to form a technology business and grow from that point. God was so gracious because for many years, I had carried this desire to have my own technology company where I could put biblical principles to practice. I would think and dream about this so much. And here, in January 2001, this desire was fulfilled. It all came together at the right time, at God's appointed time.

Jesus walked in step and in time with the Father

To help us understand the importance of times and seasons, we look at how the Lord Jesus lived His earthly life as He walked in obedience to the Father. We have several instances where we are explicitly told that Jesus was paying attention to the Father's timings. If Jesus did so, so must we.

In the launching of His miracle ministry

John 2:4
Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

In going to Jerusalem

John 7:6,8
[6] Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.
[8] You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

In the raising of Lazarus

John 11:5,6
[5] Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.
[6] So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

In going to the Cross

John 12:23,27
[23] But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.
[27] "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

John 13:1
Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

In bringing truth and revelation to His disciples

John 16:4
But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.
"And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

John 16:25
"These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.

In knowing the time of His crucifixion and glorification

John 16:32
Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

John 17:1
Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

Ask, "Is this the right time?"

Understanding God's times and seasons for your life will help you receive His guidance and follow Him through various seasons of life.

In making decisions, one of the questions we should ask ourselves is, "Is this the correct time and season to do this?" The answer to that question will help you receive His guidance.

In many of the decisions we have made and continue to make at APC, this issue of timing is very important. In August 2005, when we knew the time was right, we launched our Bible College. We were still a young congregation, but this was an important part of what we were and are called to do—equip and send people out to expand God's Kingdom.

In the way we develop our leaders locally, timing is important. We are not in a hurry to entrust them with leadership roles. We let them prove themselves with responsibilities at one level, learn, grow, mature, and then move them up to the next. We move people into leadership positions, grow and nurture them at the right time.

For more on times and seasons, please see the APC book, "**A Time for Every Purpose"** available as a free download at **apcwo.org/books.**

Reflection



1) How does understanding times and seasons (in our personal lives) help us receive God's guidance in our lives?
2) How would you go about recognizing that the time is right for a particular action or decision you have been pondering over?

13

Circumstances and Divine Orchestrations

The final method or way that we will be considering, through which we receive God's guidance, is by recognizing what He is orchestrating in our circumstances and life situations.

2 Chronicles 16:9
For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

God exerts His power on our behalf. One of the areas in which God does this is in our circumstances and life situations, where He divinely orchestrates things for us. This could be unusual doors of opportunity, favor and access to people, new contracts and many other things that God can cause in our life circumstances. When God does such things, no one can prevent Him or stop Him. The most amazing things, literally, what eyes have not seen, what ears have not heard, what people have never imagined, such things take place in our life situations.

Job 42:2
"I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose *of Yours* can be withheld from You.

Revelation 3:7
"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,
'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

So, we need to be attentive to divine orchestrations happening in our life situations and respond correctly.

For example, as you are praying about your professional career, and asking God for direction, you do your part. You build the skills you need. You look out for jobs, attend interviews, etc. These are things you can do. You trust that God will order your steps into the right job and position you for growth and increase. Of course, there are so many different scenarios that could unfold, but consider a simple and easy one. You receive just one job offer and it is a great opportunity, and something that fits well with your skills and capabilities. While you will look for other confirmations that we have considered earlier (for example, the inner witness of the Spirit, the renewed mind, etc.) in most cases, the fact that this opportunity has been placed before you is God's guidance to you that this is the direction you need to move into. Unless there are very definite reasons not to take this job up (for example, you are required to do unethical things, or you have a clear witness in your spirit not to take it up, or God gives you a dream not to take it up, etc.), you can proceed into this job. So, in this matter, God has ordered your steps through the circumstances He has orchestrated for you. You have received God's guidance through the divine orchestration of life situations and circumstances.

Stay mindful of other factors at work in life situations

A very important fact to keep in mind is that not everything that happens in our circumstances and situations is God's work. We hear the statements "God is in control," "If it is God's will, it will happen" and so on, and people use it to mean that whatever happens in our life situations is from God. But that is not true. There is a devil who is also at work, hindering us, opposing the purposes of God, causing disturbances, etc. That is why we are told to resist the devil and overcome the world. That is why we are to speak to storms to calm them, and to mountains to move them. The storms and mountains are there as hindrances

and must not be accepted as God's will for us. They must be seen as hindrances to God's will and hence, must be dealt with through faith. Then there are other people and our own choices and decisions that cause different situations to happen. For instance, we will reap of what we sow, or to put it differently, we will face the consequences of our choices and actions. These consequences cannot be blamed on God or the devil or other people. These are the consequences of our choices and we must take responsibility.

While we are aware that God will work in our circumstances and situations, we must not accept everything that comes our way as from God. We must discern and act with wisdom. Accept what is from God. Confront and overcome what is of the enemy.

Your fleece could get you fleeced

Judges 6:36-40

36 So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—
37 look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said."
38 And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water.
39 Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew."
40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

We have this incident in the Old Testament where Gideon placed a fleece before God to receive God's confirmation about his calling to be a deliverer for Israel. God accommodated him and led him through that. While God can do this again, we strongly urge believers not to try putting out a fleece. Gideon had

no other choice at that time. However, for the New Testament believers, we have the primary ways through which God leads and guides us, which is His written Word and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. For the New Testament believers, God has called us to be instructed by His Word (2 Timothy 3:16,17) and to learn to listen and be led by His Spirit (Romans 8:14).

We must not disregard these, and try to use fleeces. Remember, your fleece could get you fleeced. So, watch out!

What about casting lots?

Acts 1:24-26

[24] And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen
[25] to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."
[26] And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The apostles, after Jesus' ascension, wanted to find a man to take the place of Judas Iscariot. So, they picked two men who satisfied the criteria to replace Judas, and cast lots. They asked God to guide the selection, and the lot fell on Matthias, to be included among the twelve apostles.

However, keep in mind that this exercise of casting lots to receive God's guidance was done before the Day of Pentecost. The apostles were not yet familiar with the work and activity of the Holy Spirit.

What we do see later in the book of Acts, is that when important decisions were to be made, they relied on the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Consider these two instances.

In Acts 13, it was the Holy Spirit who called out Barnabas and Saul for their work in the apostolic ministry. The leaders at Antioch did not cast lots for this.

Acts 13:2
As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

At the important Council at Jerusalem, when the apostles and elders made their decision, James quoted from the Scriptures (Amos 9:11-13) and then stated that their decision was of the Holy Spirit. Here again, no lots were cast.

Acts 15:28
For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

The point we wish to make is that we as New Testament believers do not use the casting of lots to make important decisions just as we do not put out fleeces, but depend on the Scriptures and the leading of the Holy Spirit. There are other secondary ways that we have also mentioned in this book through which God leads us, but these have to be tested against the Word and the inner witness of the Spirit.

Here are some facts to keep in mind as you consider life circumstances and situations to understand God's direction for your life.

Not every closed door is a "No"

Some closed doors are there because you are supposed to "knock" on them, perhaps even "knock" them open.

Matthew 7:7,8
[7] "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

[8] For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Some doors are closed simply to redirect you to the correct door that will open up to the right space for you. The closed door does not mean that the purpose you are pursuing is not for you. It just means that the purpose has to be released from a different place.

When Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem, there was not a single room for them in the inn. The absence of a room in the inn did not in any way deny the fact that she was carrying the very Son of God, conceived by the power of the Spirit of God. Jesus was born in a place where animals were kept and placed in the animals-feeding trough (manger, Luke 2:7), but none of this diminished the significance of who He is or His impact on the human race.

Just remember, a closed door does not always mean "No". You must discern what God wants and pursue it.

Not every delay is a denial

Sometimes, we expect something to happen in a particular time frame and we tend to give up or quit if things don't happen in the time frame we envisioned. So often, we interpret delays as denials. This is not so. As we learned in the previous chapter, God unfolds things in their appointed time, and we need to wait for God's '*kairos*' time.

Think about Joseph. As a teenager, he had been given dreams of what God would do through his life. Time passed by. Things only seemed to get worse for him. Sold and sent off to Egypt as a

slave, and then falsely accused and thrown into prison. Did this mean that God's purpose for His life would never be fulfilled? No! God was orchestrating things and working things out even through his coming into the prison. It was in the prison that "his word" (interpreting of dreams) was released and it came to pass. And suddenly, things changed and he began to see God's plans unfold right before his eyes. All along, God was testing (refining as metal is refined and purified) Joseph and getting him ready for his life assignment.

Psalm 105:17-22
17 He sent a man before them—Joseph—*who* was sold as a slave.
18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons.
19 Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the Lord tested him.
20 The king sent and released him, The ruler of the people let him go free.
21 He made him lord of his house, And ruler of all his possessions,
22 To bind his princes at his pleasure, And teach his elders wisdom.

So, as we are considering our circumstances and situations, we must be careful not to interpret delays as denials.

Pushing open closed doors and standing through delays

Hence, while we discern and receive God's guidance by recognizing His hand at work in our life situations and His divine orchestrations, we must be careful...

1) Not to accept every closed door as a "No". Some doors must be pushed open!
2) Not to accept every delay as a denial. Sometimes, we need to stand through time.
3) Yet, do not read too much into everything that happens. Don't become spooky and weird. Don't become superstitious or irrational.

We need to discern when God is orchestrating something, and when He is not. Recognize when God is at work and accept that as His way of guiding you into His purposes. Walk into what He orchestrates for you.

In our journey as a local church, there have been numerous times God has guided us through circumstances and divine orchestrations. Maybe it was someone coming along our path sharing some information with us, an unusual door opening for us and so on.

Here are a few examples.

May / June 2002: Starting APC Mangalore

In November 2001, Dr. Ranjit Peter visited us in Bangalore and mentioned about a place outside Mangalore called Deralekette, where there were many colleges, and recommended that we start a local church there for the students. We kept that in mind. APC Bangalore was still very small, not even a year old. In the early part of 2002, four of us went to Deraleketta to scout the place. We saw the colleges and noticed a video cinerama, a small hall that could seat about 50 people where they screened video movies. We asked the owner if we could rent his place for a music concert on a Saturday, and then every Sunday for church services, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., just before his first show started at 1 p.m. He was fine. So, we did a one-man music concert! Georgy Sam led a music concert in this tiny rented movie hall in Deraleketta, Mangalore on Saturday, June 08, 2002. Maybe about 20 people came to the concert! Then we had our first service of All Peoples Church-Mangalore (initially called as APC Deraleketta), the next day, Sunday, June 09, 2002. Over the years, the lives of numerous college students have been powerfully touched, enriched and transformed through this church plant. Today, the local church is a thriving congregation based in Mangalore city.

July 2002: Starting APC Nepali Church

In July 2002, a group of about 10 Nepali people approached me to lead them in worship and to teach the Word every Tuesday 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Now, it was not in our plan to minister to Nepali people or to have a Nepali congregation. However, with this small and simple beginning, All Peoples Church Nepali Fellowship started in July 2002. God was faithful providing people to help us minister to the Nepali people. The Nepali congregation grew, and hundreds of Nepali people were ministered to over the years. In 2017, we released them to form their own local church and establish a wonderful community of believers.

June 2008: Launching of Catalyst

Sometime in March / April, Dr. A.F. Pinto, Chairman of Ryan International Schools and of Xavier Group of Institutions, met with me and asked if APC could conduct Scripture classes for the students of Ryan International School, Yelahanka. I agreed to do so even though we did not know how we were going to do this, nor did we have the right people available. But sure enough, Ps.Selina Macwana was interviewed and joined us in June 2008 and right away launched 'CATALYST,' our outreach into schools. We started with Ryan International School, Yelahanka and expanded into other schools.

June 2012: God TV (Asia)

In June 2012, we received a call from GodTV in Chennai inviting us to run a weekly paid program on GodTV (Asia). APC was not the largest church in Bangalore city and yet, we were privileged to be given this invitation. We had the necessary finances and there were people to help us produce the programs, and so we took the step into this.

October 2012: Start of the Short-Term Bible College (STBC)

In 2011, Dr. Ashok Chacko from Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA) had contacted APC to see if APC could help serve its hospitals spiritually. In November 2011, I visited EHA Christian Hospital in Champa (Chattisgarh) and EHA Christian Hospital in Chattarpur (Madhya Pradesh). Mr. Jone Wills, the Director of EHA Christian Hospital in Champa, arranged a meeting with the local pastors. They expressed a desire for a short-term Bible course to equip their people. So, in October 2012, APC organized a short-term Bible course at the EHA Christian Hospital in Champa to equip pastors and ministry leaders, who had not received any prior training, to make an impact in their areas of ministry. We ran this for two years (2012 and 2013) at EHA Champa. With this, APC's short-term Bible course was born and we have been able to run this in other parts of India. We've been doing this every year in Varanasi (since 2015) and have been able to train many people over the years.

Reflection



1) Can you recall one or two experiences in life where you were seeking God to guide you, and He did so by orchestrating your circumstances and life situations?
2) What guidelines can we use that will help us discern (recognize) that God is orchestrating things for us? (as opposed to when the devil is setting up a "trap" for us)
3) How would you discern that a "closed door" you are facing in a particular situation is something you must knock open, and not walk away from?

14
Putting It All Together

In this final chapter, we "tie everything together" and share some practical insights that will be helpful as we seek to order our lives with guidance and direction from God.

We must walk humbly before God, always seeking, listening to His direction and obeying Him in what He instructs us to do.

More ways than one

Job 33:14-16
[14] For God may speak in one way, or in another, *Yet man* does not perceive it.
[15] In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, While slumbering on their beds,
[16] Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction.

Often, when God speaks, He does so to us in a multiplicity of ways. This means that He is speaking to us in any combination of the 11 ways we have described. It is our responsibility to "perceive" (Hebrew '*šûr*;' pronounced '*shoor'* meaning "to go round in inspection, to survey, look") what God is speaking through different ways, recognize these and put them all together to receive His guidance and direction for our lives.

Testing and validating your leading

We have considered 11 ways through which we can receive God's guidance and direction for our lives.

1) The Word
2) The inner witness of the Holy Spirit
3) The voice of the Holy Spirit
4) Gifts of the Holy Spirit
5) Dreams and visions
6) Prophecies
7) Angels
8) Godly counsel
9) The renewed mind
10) Times and seasons
11) Circumstances and divine orchestrations

We are not limiting or restricting God to speak His guidance to us in just these ways. Rather, these are what we are accustomed to. God can speak and move in fresh new ways.

However, we consider the first three, (1) The Word, (2) The inner witness of the Holy Spirit, and (3) The voice of the Holy Spirit, as the primary ways to receive God's guidance. We refer to these as "primary" because they are reliable. The remaining eight are what we refer to as secondary, and must be verified, tested and validated with the Word of God and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

When you receive guidance through any of the secondary ways (the last eight ways), always make it a point to test it. Do not rush off and do something without testing or validating it with the Word of God and with the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

Ask yourself two simple questions.

1) Is what I feel led to do aligned and in harmony with the Word of God? If there is no specific Scripture on the matter, you can check if what you feel led to do is aligned to the nature and character of God.
2) What is the Holy Spirit witnessing (speaking) in my spirit about this? Do I sense His peace and His approval on this matter?

Two or three witnesses

2 Corinthians 13:1
This *will be* the third *time* I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

The apostle Paul is quoting from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 19:15) as he addresses matters at the local church at Corinth. This is a truth that we can apply for validating and testing guidance from God if we receive it through any of the secondary (the last eight) ways we have mentioned earlier. We ensure that there are two or three witnesses confirming the guidance we have received.

For example, if your decision is based on a specific instruction in the Word of God, then you can step out on it with confidence. In other situations, you may have a quickened Word as well as the inner witness of the Spirit. Once again, in such a situation, you can proceed with confidence in doing what you have been directed to do by the Lord.

Consider a situation where someone gave you a word of prophecy that was directive in nature. Perhaps telling you to move to a certain city and start a specific business. Your response would be to thank the Lord for the prophecy, make a note of it, and then proceed to test if this is of the Lord. Do not immediately pack up and relocate to that city. No. Do not do that. The prophecy must be tested (1 Thessalonians 5:20,21) and you also need to know the timing for its execution as well as do the necessary preparation before you take the step. In testing the prophecy, you would want to see what the Holy Spirit is bearing witness (speaking) to you in your spirit. You may also desire to get godly counsel about the prophecy. You would expect God to speak to you through the quickened Word. You must be open to see if God speaks about this same thing through other

means, for example, through dreams, visions, prophecy; through another person who does not know about this already, angels, etc. Once you are assured that this is what God wants you to do, you will then seek God's timing on it. You also begin the process of preparing yourself for it. You will observe what God is orchestrating in your situations and seize opportunities He is bringing your way. So, as we put all this together, we can walk with strength and confidence into the plans and purposes of God for our lives.

We are all learning, so we will make mistakes

John 10:4,5,27
4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.
5 Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."
27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

My journey in learning to receive God's guidance has not been perfect. I have made mistakes. But every mistake is an opportunity to learn. We can gain something good from the mistakes made in hearing God.

Our challenge is to discern the voice of our Shepherd from the voice of our own souls (self, desires), the voice of the world and from the voice of the stranger, which is the devil. The devil is crafty. He makes his voice sound as close to the voice of the Lord Himself to divert us. But as God's sheep, we must learn to "know His voice" so that we can distinguish it from the voice of the enemy, or the voice of our self and the voice of the world around us. When we "know" His voice, we can also "hear" His voice and we can "follow" Him.

This is a learning process. And we will make mistakes along the way. But remember, God is with us and will restore

us and get us back on track. Often, the enemy attacks us on our "blind side," when we cannot see our own mistakes. That is why we need each other to look out for each other so we can help each other stay on track. We must acknowledge our mistakes and get back on course.

Here is an interesting passage of Scripture. In Isaiah 30, God, through His prophet, rebukes His people for looking to Egypt for help instead of looking to Him. The people have rejected the law of God (v.9), have rejected the prophets and seers of God (v.10) and the Lord Himself (v.11). Yet to such a rebellious people, God says that He will wait for them to return to Him. He also promises them,

Isaiah 30:20,21
[20] And *though* the Lord gives you
The bread of adversity and the water of affliction,
Yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore,
But your eyes shall see your teachers.
[21] Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying,
"This *is* the way, walk in it,"
Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.

Some English versions translate "teachers" as "Teacher" referring to the Lord Himself as the Teacher of His people. Either way, God is promising His people that even during their rebellion and God's corrective dealings with them, they will be able to hear and receive His guidance on the right way to walk. How much more then should we be able to hear His voice teaching us "This is the way, walk in it" when we are earnestly seeking Him for guidance?

Getting back on course

Psalm 18:36
You enlarged my path under me, So my feet did not slip.

It is possible to walk with God in such a manner where we experience God clearing the path for every step we take (enlarging my path under me) so that we walk without stumbling. We know that David who spoke these words (Psalm 18) was a man who inquired of God constantly. He honored God in his choices. He walked with wisdom.

However, David also made mistakes through wrong choices, selfish desires and experienced trouble.

Consider what David said.

In Psalm 25, while David prayed for God to teach him and guide him, he also affirmed that when David found his feet trapped in "the net" (any tight situation, any snare of man), David would keep his eyes on the Lord knowing that God would bring Him out.

Psalm 25:4,15
4 Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths.
15 My eyes *are* ever toward the Lord, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net

In Psalm 37, David affirmed that his steps were ordered by the Lord, because God delighted in his ways. He had the assurance that even if he stumbled and fell, God would hold him up. It would not be the end.

Psalm 37:23,24
23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds *him with* His hand.

In our journey through life, all of us will make mistakes. We are still learning how to resist the temptations of the enemy and crucify our fleshly desires. We are learning how to listen to God

and receive His guidance in our lives. So, along the way, even if we make wrong choices, wrong decisions, we keep our eyes fixed on the Lord. He is bigger than our mistakes. He is bigger than the detours we have taken. He is bigger than the messes we have created. He will work out His plans and purposes as long as we get back to Him, let Him realign us and work in us and through us. No plan of His can be defeated. He restores time. He restores all that may have been wasted away. He is the great Redeemer.

We present here, in the rest of this chapter, practical instructions for us so that we can order and live our lives in such a way that we receive His guidance correctly and accurately.

Staying on the side of caution and taking risks in faith

Romans 11:33,34
33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!
34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?"

The wisdom, knowledge, decisions and ways of God are beyond comprehension. We are constantly learning and learning a little bit more of His wisdom, knowledge, decisions and ways. We cannot put God in a box. He is infinite. What we have now, is just a very finite, miniscule understanding of His ways. God can and will guide and lead us in unusual ways, in ways we have never imagined. We must stay open, receptive and obedient.

There will be times when, like Abraham, we step out with God knowing that God has spoken, knowing that He is guiding and yet not knowing where we are going. We just follow, one step at a time, moment by moment. We take risks by faith.

Hebrews 11:8
By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going

And then there are certain decisions when we will stay on the side of caution. We only step out when we know we have sufficient details and are sure that God is guiding us and leading us.

As we journey through life, we must learn to walk with God both ways—times when we stay on the side of caution, and then times when we take risks in faith. There is no one uniform, standard way in which we will make all decisions. We must know when to do what—when to move cautiously and when to take risks.

The beautiful thing is that as we make decisions and step out with God, He will make things clearer and brighter. We will discover that with His help, the decisions we made were right and He is continuing to lead and guide us, His sons and daughters.

Proverbs 4:18
But the path of the just *is* like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

Staying with His last instruction

Another thing we must learn in journeying with God is that there will be seasons when God is not speaking or leading us to do anything new or different. You are in a certain season of life, things are in place and going well. And you don't seem to be hearing anything new from God about changing what you are doing or stepping into anything different.

When it seems like you have been "put on hold" or if you are not hearing anything "new" or "different," then it is important to

stay with His last instruction. Keep doing what He has told you to do, faithfully, consistently, with excellence and for His glory. You can continue to grow, increase, expand and move to new levels in the last thing He assigned you to.

1 Corinthians 4:1,2
[1] Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
[2] Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

We are stewards of all that God has entrusted to us. What God expects of us as stewards is that we remain faithful. To be faithful is to be trustworthy, dependable, someone who can be counted upon. Someone who will remain at their post, doing what they have been assigned to do, no matter what. Stay faithful with what God has assigned to you and keep growing in it until He tells you to do something new or different.

Avoid being self-driven and stubborn

Proverbs 14:12
There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death.

One of biggest challenges to receiving God's guidance and direction for our lives is that we may be pursuing things (goals, dreams) that are motivated and driven of self. Sometimes, the "what" may be good and noble. However, the "why" may be the impure and wicked self. We get so focused on doing something to satisfy our selfish interests that we are unable to listen to what God is speaking to us. The way may seem right to us, but if it is motivated by self, the outcome is not going to be pleasant or God-glorifying.

Closely connected to being self-driven is being stubborn. When we are stubborn, we have an attitude that insists on having our way and no other way. Stubbornness is a wrong heart attitude

often birthed out of spiritual pride. We are unwilling to learn from others, unwilling to receive godly counsel, not teachable, claiming superiority of revelation or spiritual experience, etc. (**Note**: There is a good sense in which we need to be "stubborn," that is, absolutely resolute in our decision. We are referring to the bad kind of stubbornness here).

One of the things Moses feared greatly is that God would not go with His people. Moses knew that without the presence of God with them, they were nothing (Exodus 33:14,15). So, he asked God to forgive their sin and stubbornness, and prayed that God would go among and with His people.

Exodus 34:9
Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

Moses points out that stubbornness was a heart issue.

Deuteronomy 10:16
Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Deuteronomy 10:16 (ERV)
Stop being stubborn. Give your hearts to God.

Coming to the place of surrender, yielding our hearts to God and giving Him right over our desires, dreams, plans and pursuits is the antidote to self and stubbornness. We will be in a better place to receive God's guidance for our lives when we live surrendered and submitted to Him.

Psalm 25:9
The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

Avoid being aimless

Now when we talk about surrender and yielding, some people swing to the other extreme where they fail to take on responsibility and therefore live aimless and purposeless lives. They have the wrong notion that planning, strategizing and preparing are expressions of self and hence, do not make any plans or preparations.

Our approach must be to seek God's guidance and direction for our lives and then work hard, plan, strategize and prepare ourselves to see His purposes fulfilled.

Even after we plan, we commit our works to the Lord and depend on Him establishing what we do. We plan according to the guidance He has given us, and we know that as we work out the plan, God will direct our steps.

Proverbs 16:3,9
[3] Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established.
[9] A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

Just because God has led and directed us to do something does not mean the road is always going to be easy. We exercise patience, diligence and endurance as we work out a plan of God that is based on the guidance we have received from God.

Proverbs 21:5
The plans of the diligent *lead* surely to plenty, But *those of* everyone *who is* hasty, surely to poverty.

Avoid distractions

We must learn to stay focused on what God has assigned or directed us to do. Distractions come our way to break our focus. When our focus is broken, we tend to waste time, energy and resources on things we were not supposed to be doing.

When you have received God's direction, follow it through. Don't try to add things to it that God never intended for you. Don't copy from other people. Lay aside all the additional weights and sins that easily distract us and slow us down. Run the race with focus.

The Lord led me as I was on the way

Genesis 24:27
And he said, "Blessed *be* the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."

Steering a parked vehicle really makes no sense. We do not do it. But once the vehicle starts moving, then it needs to be steered and doing so is useful and necessary.

Sometimes, our inaction and indecision prevent us from receiving God's direction for our lives. Any instruction, guidance or direction that God may be speaking to us makes no sense to us because we are "parked." The "ignition" is off. The "handbrake" is on. And we complain, God is not steering (leading, guiding) me. Well, to receive His guidance and direction, we need to turn on the ignition, put the vehicle into drive and step on the accelerator. Then His guidance and direction will steer us taking us into His purposes.

Think about Abraham's servant who was commissioned with the task of finding a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24). He didn't just pray and do nothing. He set out on his mission and prayed for God to grant him success. His testimony was, "*as I was on my way the Lord led me to the right person*." If we desire to receive His guidance and direction in our lives, we must be in a place of ready obedience, ready to act and do what He says.

We are all called to wait on God. But waiting on God is not inaction. Waiting on God is not being in a state of passivity. Waiting on God is an active stance. We are before Him for Him, to do His bidding. We are not before Him with the attitude, "God I am here just to be with You, so don't tell me to do anything." We are before Him, spending time with Him, waiting on Him, with the attitude, "God I am here just to be with You and I am ready to do anything You tell me to do. Here I am, send me." When we are in this posture of waiting, God speaks His guidance and directives.

Avoid dwelling in the past, look ahead

Philippians 3:13,14
13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do,* forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,
14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

A final word and closing thought as we journey through life doing our utmost to walk in obedience to His leading, guidance and direction over our lives. We will go through some great mountain top experiences. We will also have to walk through some challenging seasons of life. But as the apostle Paul said, we must learn to "forget" things of the past and keep reaching forward to what is ahead. We cannot live in the glories of the past. Neither should we be trapped in the failures, disappointments, hurts or tragedies of the past. The finish line is ahead of us, not behind us. We must put all we've got to move toward the goal ahead of us to finish the course set before us. We cannot drive a vehicle always looking in the rear-view mirror. An occasional glance is fine. But most of the time we are looking ahead.

Release the past. Start afresh. God can make all things new. Receive His guidance. Move ahead. The future is far greater

than you've imagined. Let the Lord lead you into His highest and best for you.

Reflection



1) Why is it important to test and validate what we have received as God's guidance before we step out on it?
2) How would we know when to stay on the side of caution and when to take a risk of faith as we follow His guidance in our lives?
3) What does it mean to stay with His last instruction?
4) If God reveals His guidance and direction for our lives, why do we still need to plan, strategize and prepare to carry it out? Won't it just happen since He gave us guidance?
5) Can you think of one or more situations where you "missed it" when receiving God's guidance, and God brought you back on track in your life? Share one such situation.

Do You Know the GOD Who Loves You?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did reveal God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus did many miracles on the earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame to walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So why then would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, ***"For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"*** **(Romans 6:23).** Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross. Then, three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven.

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so, He came to provide a way for the entire human

race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and to believe in Him wholeheartedly.

***"… through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins"* (Acts 10:43).**

***"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved"* (Romans 10:9).**

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you decide to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me, you shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I decide to believe in You and to accept what You did for me by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins.

Thank You, Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You.

Amen.

About All Peoples Church

Our vision at All Peoples Church is to be salt and light in the city of Bangalore, a voice to the nation and to the nations.

All Peoples Church is a **Jesus loving**, **Word focused**, **Spirit filled**, family church, an equipping center, a missions base and a world outreach.

- As a **family church**, we grow together as a community in Christ-centered fellowship, caring and serving each other in love as the assembly of God.
- As an **equipping center**, we empower and equip every believer to live victoriously, mature into Christlikeness and fulfill God's purposes for their lives.
- As a **missions base**, we engage in meaningful ministry to bless our city, nation and the nations with the full Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Word of God and supernatural demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit.
- As a **world outreach**, we serve locally and globally by nurturing godly leaders and Spirit-filled churches who can impact their regions for the Kingdom of God.

At APC, we are committed to presenting the complete, uncompromised Word of God in the anointing and demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We believe that good music, creative presentations, brilliant apologetics, contemporary ministry techniques, latest technology and so on, can never substitute the God-ordained approach of proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4,5; Hebrews 2:3,4). Our theme is Jesus, our content is the Word, our method is the Holy Spirit's power, our passion is people and our goal is Christ-like maturity.

With our main base in Bangalore, All Peoples Church has several other church locations in India. To get a current listing and contact information of All Peoples Church locations, please visit our website at **apcwo.org/locations** or send an email to **contact@apcwo.org**.

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Chrysalis Counseling is a ministry of All Peoples Church & World Outreach.

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All Peoples Church ministers beyond its own borders as a local church by reaching out across India, especially North India, with a special focus on (A) Strengthening Leaders, (B) Equipping young people for ministry and (C) Building up the Body of Christ. Several training seminars for young people and 'Christian Leaders' Conference' are held throughout the year. In addition, several thousands of copies of publications are distributed free of cost in English and other Indian languages with the purpose of equipping believers in the Word and in the Spirit.

We invite you to partner with us financially by sending either a one-time gift or a monthly financial gift. Any amount that you can send to help us in this work across our nation will be greatly appreciated.

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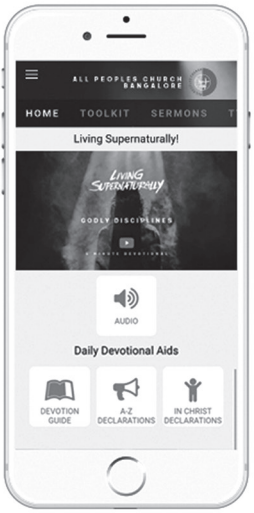
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विश्वास को मजबूत करने और सुसमाचार साझा करने के लिए विभिन्न विषयों पर आधारित वचनों के टूलकिट।
उपदेशों, टीवी कार्यक्रमों, पुस्तकों, संगीत और बहुत कुछ से भरे संसाधन।
अगर आपको यह पसंद आए, तो
दूसरों को भी इसके बारे में बताएं!

ALL PEOPLES CHURCH BIBLE COLLEGE

apcbiblecollege.org

All Peoples Church Bible College and Ministry Training Center in Bangalore, India, provides Spirit-filled, anointed, hands-on training and equipping for ministering in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit along with a doctrinally sound and intellectually stimulating study of God's Word. We believe in developing the whole person for ministry emphasizing godly character, deep roots in the Word of God and powerful demonstrations of signs, wonders and miracles, all flowing out of an intimate relationship with the Lord.

At All Peoples Church Bible College (APC-BC), in addition to sound teaching, we emphasize the love of God in demonstration, the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural work of God. Several young men and women have been trained and sent out to fulfill God's call over their lives.

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God has promised to lead and guide us. In this book, we share several ways by which we can receive God's guidance in our lives.

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3) The voice of the Holy Spirit
4) Gifts of the Holy Spirit
5) Dreams and visions
6) Prophecies
7) Angels
8) Godly counsel
9) The renewed mind
10) Times and seasons
11) Circumstances and divine orchestrations

We also share several personal stories that help illustrate these. You will learn how to hear from God and receive His guidance so you can fulfill God's purposes for your life.

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