

The background of the title is a reproduction of Michelangelo's 'The Creation of Adam' fresco, showing the hands of God and Adam reaching toward each other. The text is overlaid on this image in a bold, orange, sans-serif font with a white outline.

Following the Promptings of the Holy Spirit

by Jason Peebles

The greatest gift that Christians have received, other than salvation itself, is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. **The moment that you committed your life to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit entered your heart. At that time, you were “sealed” and marked by the Holy Spirit as God’s possession.** Ephesians 1:13 says, *“In whom (Christ) you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after you believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”* You may not have been aware of it then – and, perhaps even now, this is new information for you. But the great news is that if you are a Christian, you have the wonderful Holy Spirit living in you! **Your job is to get to know Him better and become sensitive to His guidance.**

Becoming Sensitive to the Spirit

The Bible tells us in many places that the Holy Spirit will endeavor to prompt you, lead you, and guide you (Rom 8:14). Therefore, it is vital for you to learn how to follow His lead and obey His promptings. **At times it may seem like a little voice speaking in your heart. Some people describe it as an inner impression, a nudge, or a ‘knowing.’** The point is, the Holy Spirit wants to lead you, guide you, and help you make right choices. He wants you to succeed in life! He knows the right path that you should take. John 16:13 says, *“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 show you things to come.” Additionally, 1 John 2:27 tells us that one of the main jobs of the Holy Spirit is to teach us how to “abide in Christ” – that is, to live in fellowship with Him, trust Him, and depend on Him.

I can remember when I first accepted Christ in High School. At that time, I didn’t know much about the Holy Spirit. All I knew was what we said each Sunday in the Presbyterian Church that my parents attended. We always said, *“We believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”* **It never occurred to me that the Holy Spirit was, in fact, God’s very presence that wanted to live in me, speak to me, and guide me.** But all that changed once I accepted Christ and began to study the Bible on my own. I became aware of His presence. One of the very first things that the Holy Spirit did in my life as a teenager was to begin a “character makeover!” I suddenly I had a desire to clean up my life. My language was one of the first things that began to change. I also started being convicted about areas in my life that were impure. I began having desires to live in a way that would honor God. Things that I use to do without a thought began to make me uncomfortable. God was changing me.

As I look back, it was the Holy Spirit working in me. One of the most noticeable things (at least to me) was that I had an increasing desire to find God’s plan for my life. I became more and more aware that Christ wanted to be the Lord of my life – not just my Savior, but my master. Even though these desires began to emerge, I was still not very knowledgeable about the Holy Spirit. **In retrospect, I can clearly see that the Spirit of God was the one prompting me, urging me, leading me, and helping me get on the right path.** I imagine that if you reflect back over your life, you too can recall how the Holy Spirit worked in you and helped you. Was I “perfect” when I started changing? Absolutely not! I wasn’t perfect then and I’m certainly not perfect now. As long as we are in this world, there will be a battle between your flesh and the Spirit. Galatians 5:18 says, *“For the flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.”* But God can help us win this battle. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says that he changes us little by little – *“from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.”* Philippians 2:13 says, *“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”*

So dear friend, once you wake up to the fact that the Holy Spirit is in you, make it your goal to become more and more sensitive to Him. **Learn to follow His leadings, promptings, and guidance. And, not only sensitive to His promptings – but OBEDIENT to what He shows you. Obedience is very important if you want to make progress in the will of God.** The moment you disobey something that the Holy Spirit shows you, it slows you down in your Christian walk. It’s like trying to run a race with a ball and chain tied to your ankle! Hebrews 12:1 says, *“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”* All of us have “sins” and “weights” that we must deal with and lay aside. A weight is not necessarily a sin. **There are some things that the Holy Spirit may ask you to lay aside that are not necessarily wrong – but, for you, it will slow you down in God’s will if you hold on to it.** Relationships can be like that. For example, someone who previously was your best buddy may not want to follow Christ like you do. You may have to lay it down like a “weight.”



Through the years, I’ve seen good Christians at times disobey things that the Holy Spirit specifically told them – and they suffered for it. No, it wasn’t God who punished them – it was the consequences of their own

wrong choices (Gal 6:7-9). God tried to warn them but they thought they knew better. Thank God, when we mess up, the Lord is right there to help us recover -- but it's best to obey from the start! **Friend, when the Holy Spirit prompts you in certain areas, then it's only because He has your best interests in mind. He wants you to succeed in life. At the time, you may not be able to see or understand the reasons – but obey Him anyway.** I've learned (and, yes, I admit sometimes the hard way) that it's much better to trust Him and follow His promptings. God longs for you to have the joy that only comes when you abide in Him and follow His will (Jn 15:11).

Miracles That I Almost Missed

Many years ago, I almost missed God's prompting to start our MISSIONARY AGENCY. I mentioned some of these details in a previous Study Guide entitled *"The Secret of Desire"* – but here's how close I came to missing it. At the time, I was in the southern part of the Philippines on the island of Bohol. I was conducting crusades and a leadership conference for pastors throughout the region. One evening, between meetings, God sent a missionary couple to me that desperately needed a "home office." **They explained that a church in Texas had been helping them with their support letters, tax receipts, deposits, etc. However, the church just informed them that they would no longer be able to help them because of problems within the church.** As they shared their plight, they made an appeal for my office to begin handling all those details for them. Now, here are some details of the story that I did not cover in the other study guide. The Holy Spirit had, in fact, been dealing with me about starting a Missionary Agency. At the time, it was rather vague in my mind as to what this would entail, but the idea had been formulating in my mind. For months, I had been thinking about it and praying about it. Yet, when God sent the first couple, I didn't put two and two together, so to speak. My "knee-jerk" reaction was to say no. I said "no" to them right on the spot. Wow! How could I have been so blind? **Well, dear friend, I think all of us are rather blind without the light of the Holy Spirit to help us. I nearly missed a HUGE miracle in God's plan for my life.**

Now, let's talk about those "weights and sins"

that we mentioned earlier – you know, the ones that Hebrews 12:1 says that we are to lay down. You see, at the time, I was perfectly happy doing crusades around the world and conducting leadership conferences. Even to this day, I think it's a powerful combination. We would teach pastors and leaders during the daytime, and then in the evenings we would hold crusades in villages. I can't tell you how many thousands we brought to Christ through the years. And, in some cases, we started new church-plants right on the heels of the crusades. Remember, we were teaching pastors during the daytime so it was relatively easy to take the new converts and assign a young pastor to them. And, voila! – new churches were born! Sometimes, a pastor and his wife would relocate great distances to adopt the new group of converts that we had. It was like the book of Acts and the apostle Paul. And, right in the middle of my wonderful plans, God sent a missionary couple asking us to be there home office. **The point of this story is that I nearly missed a miracle by not obeying the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Are crusades bad? No. Are conferences bad? No. But God was trying to take me into a new phase of ministry.** If I had held on to "my" plans it would have been like a weight. Late that evening, the Holy Spirit prompted me again and basically said, *"Jason, get with the program!"* So I did. The next day I told the couple that God had changed my mind and we would be glad to help them. For a season, I continued with the crusades when we first started the Missionary Agency. But in time, God told me to shift my focus to the Missionary Agency. God has a race for me to run and a course laid out. My job is to comply with His guidance. Today, we serve hundreds of missionaries all over the world and help over 2,000 native workers each month with our study materials. And, the best is yet to come!

God has put a clear plan in my heart to do even more to help reach the world for Christ. I now produce training videos and telephone interviews for a **Resource Library** that we've developed for our mission workers (www.WorldOutreach.org/resources). We have a **"Starter Pack"** when they first join our Missionary Agency -- plus, ongoing Training Videos and Telephone Interviews that provide a wealth of helpful information. I have plans to do even more interviews on all kinds of areas, like - how to do medical clinics, feeding programs, campaigns, orphanages, aviation, translation work, and on and on. It's truly

unlimited because we have hundreds of mission workers operating under our umbrella now. So, friends, I'm very excited about the future! I can literally spend the rest of my life creating new tools and resources for our growing missionary family. And for those of you who support our home office, your sponsorship connects you to every one of these outreaches and the fruit they are producing.

Let me share one more story of a near miss. It concerns an AIRPLANE MIRACLE. One of the airplanes that we owned through the years was a Cessna 421 Golden Eagle. It was an awesome airplane that I personally flew for many years to ministry engagements and conferences. But we would have never owned that airplane if I had not been sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. One day, I had a business man from Florida contact me about our financial statements. Normally, we do not randomly send out our reports for obvious reasons. At first, I thought to myself, *"Why in the world would he need to know that information?"* To tell you the truth, I thought to myself, *"Who does he think he is? I don't think I'll do that."* **As those thoughts were going through my mind, I also heard a little voice (which I've come to recognize as the Holy Spirit) saying, "Send him the information and you will be glad you did. I have a miracle for you."** Well, I obeyed that little prompting on the inside and boy was I glad that I did! A few weeks later that businessman delivered a Cessna 421 Golden Eagle to the airport near my home. He knew that I was a pilot and he handed me the keys with no strings attached. It was signed over to our ministry. Now, for you folks who don't know much about airplanes, let me tell you that a Cessna 421 is one sweet airplane! For me, it was like moving up from an old car to a new Mercedes! That's how big of a jump it was for us. The Cessna 421 flies up high, goes fast, has two big engines, and has eight seats. It was one of those WOW moments! But, as I shared earlier, I nearly missed the miracle that God had for us. Thank God, I was sensitive to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit in my heart. The businessman's wife later told me that he had contacted several other ministries with the same request, but that not one of them responded to him. **Dear friend, may I put it this way? "It pays to obey God!" Never forget it – it pays to obey God.**

I am convinced that God has all types of miracles for us. Some are relationship miracles, where He may prompt us to call someone that we've been at odds with. If we obey, there will be a miracle. Some are character miracles where we overcome destructive habits and save our lives. Some are marriage miracles, where we see a new love spring up when we thought the marriage was over. And, yes, some are financial miracles and business miracles. The point is that you must learn to be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and follow them. *[By the way, I want to be a good Bible teacher here. There have been times in my life that I've missed God. I've discovered that when we do, the only way back is to repent, recommit, and get back on track. God will restore you and help you get on His path once again (1 Jn 1:9). Just ask David, Jonah, Peter, and nearly all the heroes in the Bible!]*

Develop a Listening Ear

One of the favorite sayings of Jesus was, *"He that has ears to hear, let him hear."* That phrase is repeated throughout the Gospels and even in the book of Revelation. God wants us to learn how to "tune-in" to Him. **For me, the way that you tune-in is to keep doing the simple things that you know to do in order to walk with God. Keep praying. Read and study the Bible. Spend time singing to the Lord in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph 5:16-21). When others offend you, be quick to forgive and let it go. In other words, abide in the vine!** As you do, your mind and heart will be more attuned to His promptings. Psalm 32:8 says, *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with mine eye."* As you walk with Him, expect His guidance. Become sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God."*



Dear friend, may you grow more and more in your communion with Christ and sensitivity to the Spirit.

■ Jason Peebles

Key Memory Verse:

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.”

Psalm 32:8

Prayer to Obey the Promptings of the Holy Spirit

“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. I desire to be more sensitive and obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Give me a listening ear and an obedient heart. I want your will above my own. Thank you for your great love. In Jesus Name – Amen”

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