

## The Way to Know His Will.

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In this article, I would like to discuss how we can understand the intentions of the Lord.

In order to learn “the way to know the will of the Lord” further, it is most helpful to read through the Epistle to Romans, chapter 8, verses 12 to 17 and verses 26 to 29; the Epistle to Philippians, chapter 1, verses 9 to 11; the Epistle to Colossians, chapter 1, verses 9 to 11 and the Epistle to Ephesians, chapter 3, verses 16 to 18. To come right to the point, the intentions of God can be understood through none but the Spirit of God and by nothing but the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the only way to find out what the Lord wants from us is to live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In this article, I would like to discuss this matter from three perspectives: (1) how we can live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, (2) how we will know where the guidance of the Holy Spirit is, and (3) the results of sincere obedience to the guidance of the Lord.

### 1. How to Live According to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In order to lead a life guided by the Holy Spirit, we first need to be prepared to listen to the word of God, and then to obey his word. David prayed this way:

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground. -  
Psalms 143:10.  
[International Standard Version]

David prayed while sincerely seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and it was David who fulfilled the will of the Lord. If we want to be someone who pleases the Lord, we too need to enter a life that is led by the Holy Spirit. We need to be reborn into a new life and belong to the Lord Jesus, so that we can have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. So, today we should offer this sincere prayer of David in front of the Lord again- “Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.”

“Lord, please teach me.” This was the attitude David always had, and he never stopped begging the Lord for the Lord’s teachings. Those who pray in this way will receive the abundant blessings of the Lord.

The man who had been blind since he was born also

begged the Lord Jesus for teachings. When he asked, “Who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him(John 9:36),” the Lord Jesus revealed that he was that very man. Jesus further told him, “You have seen him. He is the person who is talking with you.” Then, that man said, “Lord, I do believe,” and worshiped Jesus with all his heart. (John 9:37-38)

The Ethiopian eunuch also asked Philip for teachings. By humbly asking Philip, “How can I [understand what I am reading] unless someone guides me,” the eunuch obtained salvation and continued his trip filled with joy.

Now an angel of the Lord told Philip, “Get up and go south on the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is a deserted road.” So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, who was a member of the court of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all her treasures and had come up to Jerusalem to worship. Now he was returning home, seated in his chariot, and reading from the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit told Philip, “Approach that chariot and stay near it.” So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah out loud. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you’re reading?” The man replied, “How can I unless someone guides me?” So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him.

This was the passage of Scripture he was reading: “Like a sheep he was led away to be slaughtered, and like a lamb is silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Who can describe his descendants? For his life is taken away from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “I ask you, who is the prophet talking about? Himself? Or someone else?”

Then Philip began to speak, and, starting from this Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s some water. What keeps me from being baptized?” 8:38 So he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing and did not see Philip again.

But Philip found himself at Azotus. As he was passing through that region, he kept proclaiming the good news in all the towns until he came to Caesarea. - Acts of the Apostles 8:26-40.

This Ethiopian not only had an ear to listen to the instructions of the Lord, he was also ready to accept

and obey all the words of God.

After the conversion, Paul asked, "Lord, what must I do?" And seeing that he had humbled himself in front of the Lord and asked this question, the Lord clearly showed him the way to proceed.

Because they had been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the word in Asia, Paul and Timothy went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. - Acts of the Apostles 16:6.

And, when the jailer saw the prison doors wide open because of a great earthquake, he was about to kill himself, thinking that all prisoners had escaped, but Paul and Silas shouted at him not to. Then he begged for teachings from them saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"(Acts 16:30). Thus, trembling and in fear, he was given these amazing words of salvation: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your family will be saved"(Acts 16:31).

All of these many people were prepared to listen to the words of the Lord. At the same time, they were prepared to obey the Lord, and thus their hearts were flexible and obedient to the Lord.

It is clearly promised in the Bible that we will all be led by the Holy Spirit and will be given the guidance of that Spirit. The people of Israel actually experienced it.

The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tent. Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tent. Whenever the cloud was lifted up from the tent, the Israelis would set out on their journey, but if the cloud was not lifted up, they would not set out until it was lifted up. For the cloud of the Lord was over the tent by day, and the fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys. - Exodus 40:34-38.

David too was given the guarantee of the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I will instruct you and teach you concerning the path you should walk; I will direct you with my eye. - Psalms 32:8.

The Lord Jesus also explained the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Yet when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own accord, but will speak whatever he hears and will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me. - John 16:13-14.

When the people of Israel traveled across the wilderness, the Lord God led them with the pillar of the cloud and the pillar of fire. Likewise, all saved brothers and sisters are to be given the privilege of receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

For all who are led by God's Spirit are God's children. - Romans 8:14.

The destination of the Holy Spirit, when he led the people of Israel, was the fertile land of Canaan. Likewise, the Holy Spirit always has one definite goal in his mind as he leads us.

He led them to safety so they would not fear. As for their enemies, the sea covered them. - Psalms 78:53.

He led them in a straight way to find a city where they could live. - Psalms 107:7.

When the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness, many things happened to them. As we can see from the ordeals they had to go through, apparently they were not led on a safe and easy path to their destination. Still, the Holy Spirit finally let them enter the land of Canaan. This story shows us that the Holy Spirit eventually protected his people as he led them.

Today, the compassionate Holy Spirit is leading us too toward the heavenly perfection by which we are transformed into the image of the Lord Jesus.

When we are preoccupied with the problems and pains that occur in our lives, just like the people of Israel were, we sometimes wonder if the Lord might have forsaken us. However, when we stop at some points of our lives and look back at our past, we can't help but admit that the disease, agony, suffering, and all the kinds of problems that we have gone through were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

And, until we reach the destination to which the Holy Spirit is trying to take us, we will be challenged by even more problems.

We pray more when we are faced with problems. However, the result of our prayers is not always clear. We experience this in our prayer meetings too. We open the Bible, learn from the word of the Lord, and pray without seeing any outcome. But, why is that? It is because we are not convinced enough that what we are about to pray is the intention of the Lord. This is why we very often say in our prayers, "if you are willing, please do it this way and please make it that way." But, when we are in this kind of state of mind, we won't get any conviction, even after the prayers are said. And, when someone asks us whether our prayers are heard or not, we can only answer, "Well, that is what we hope."

However, the Lord does not desire an attitude like this. What the Bible urges us to do is to learn his intentions first, and then to offer faithful prayer with a conviction that we truly know the intentions of the Lord in our hearts.

Elijah stood firm, being convinced that he was following the Lord's will, and said these words with authority.

*As the Lord God of Israel lives, in whose presence I'm standing, there will be neither dew nor rain these next several years, except when I say so. - 1 Kings 17:1.*

*Elijah was a person just like us, and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and rain never came to the land for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the skies poured out rain, and the ground produced its crops. - James 5:17-18.*

It was because the prayer of Elijah was led by the Holy Spirit that it was heard and answered. If we, too, want our prayers to reach the throne of heaven, we also need to offer prayer that is led by the Holy Spirit.

What is important is not just to pray, but to stand firm, being convinced of the Lord's will before the prayer begins. The Holy Spirit came here to give us this conviction.

*In the same way, the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, since we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words, and the one who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, for the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will. - Romans 8:26-27.*

True prayer must be the prayer of the Holy Spirit that is prayed through us. It is not until the Holy Spirit tells us the intentions of the Lord that we are able to pray with true faith in the Lord Jesus (Galatians 2:20) and we are given the conviction that our prayers will absolutely be answered. Lack of faith and conviction arises from being unsure of the intentions of the Lord. It is for this reason that many prayers are left unanswered.

We ought to wait and seek guidance until we clearly understand the intentions of the Lord and move forward only when we are certain of what the Lord wants from us. This was what Moses did. The Lord spoke first, and then Moses acted, exactly as commanded by the Lord. Paul, too, first asked for the intention of the Lord, and then obeyed the voice he heard. The Lord Jesus always obeyed the words of his Father, which were whispered in his heart:

*You believe, don't you, that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own. It is the Father who dwells in me and who carries out his work. - John 14:10.*

The Lord Jesus was not guided by the voice he actually heard in his ears, or by the incidents happening around him. And in this way, the important thing is that the Holy Spirit speaks directly to our spirits, giving us a means by which we can understand the intentions of the Lord and stand firm, being convinced of them.

It is the Holy Spirit alone who can lead us. The Holy Spirit and all words of God in the Bible totally support each other. The Holy Spirit uses the words in the Bible as he talks to us. When we are faced with problems, the Holy Spirit picks up some words from the Bible, gives them life, and casts them into our hearts. The inner-dwelling Holy Spirit gives life to the words in the Bible and talks to us with them. No one but the Holy Spirit can truly lead us.

*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. - Romans 8:16.*

This verse, not only does it apply at the beginning of our lives of faith, but it also remains true as we continue on through our lives of faith. The Holy Spirit, who first testified that we were now children of God, continues to lead us by talking inside us. True guidance can be accomplished by no one but the Holy Spirit who lives inside us. This guidance of the inner-dwelling Spirit is a privilege granted to all brothers and sisters who have been saved by the Lord.

## **2. How do We Recognize the Guidance of the Holy Spirit?**

Now, when we are faced with some problems in our lives, how will we recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Let us discuss from five perspectives.

To begin with, as we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we first need to keep in mind that all things are prepared for the glory of the Lord.

*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. - 1 Corinthians 10:31.*

Those who keep these words deep in their mind will not be motivated by their personal intentions or desires anymore. True devotion is to totally surrender our own will to the Lord and renew that surrender every day. Only those who have entrusted their will to the Lord can be led by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus was the one who was completely guided by the Holy Spirit. And, the secret of his being able to be constantly led by the Holy Spirit can be found in this Psalm:

I delight to do your will, my God. Your Law is part of my inner being. - Psalms 40:8.

This mental attitude of the Lord Jesus is what it takes to be led constantly by the Holy Spirit. It was for this reason that the Lord Jesus had to make this testimony:

The one who sent me is with me. He has never left me alone because I always do what pleases him. - John 8:29.

Sometimes, to be led by the Holy Spirit means to throw your 'good intentions' away and be determined to obey the intentions of the Lord alone. This is not an easy thing to do. Even the Lord Jesus, who had never committed a single sin, found it difficult. The Lord Jesus prayed with these words in Gethsemane, knowing that he was going to be crucified:

I'm so deeply grieved that I feel I'm about to die. O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not what I want but what you want. - Matthew 26:38-39.

The Lord Jesus so prayed in anguish in order to carry out his Father's will.

Mary took the same attitude.

Listen! You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen, since I have not had relations with a man?" The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Most High will surround you. Therefore, the child will be holy and will be called the Son of God. Then Mary said, "Truly I am the Lord's servant. Let everything you have said happen to me." Then the angel left her. - Luke 1:31,34-35,38.

Mary prepared herself to become the mother of the Lord Jesus. According to the laws of those days, those who became pregnant before marriage had to be stoned to death, but she did not fear that danger, and in fact, surrendered herself to the Lord in order for his will to be accomplished.

You should seek the glory of the Lord more than anything else to receive the guidance of the Spirit. We will be truly blessed too if we sincerely devote ourselves to God, just like the Lord Jesus and Mary did, and if we share the desire of Paul, who said that he wanted to "obey them not only to win their favour

when their eye is on us, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from our heart"(Ephesians 6:6). Those who are prepared to obey the Lord God, and abandon themselves, are qualified to be led by the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the blessings given to them will be extremely abundant.

When young brothers and sisters are not sure about their marriage partners, they need to have an attitude like this: "Lord, I truly love this brother, that sister, but please tell me whether it is your intention that we be together in your sight; otherwise, please put an end to my feelings." If the glory of the Lord is placed at the first position of our hearts, the Lord will richly lead us. In order to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we first have to admit that all things exist for the glory of the Lord.

Secondly, we need to understand that the guidance of the Lord is always based on the word of God.

The Holy Spirit always leads us based on the Bible, which consists of the word of God. Therefore, we need to reaffirm the importance of our knowledge of the Scripture. Needless to say, it is necessary to study scripture, not only for our salvation, but also for our growth, and in order for us to be led and to be used by the Lord. The Lord is grieving over us saying, "My people are destroyed because they lack knowledge of me" (Hosea 4:6). It is also written that "Desire without knowledge is not good— how much more will hasty feet miss the way!" (Proverbs 19:2)

The Lord Jesus rebuked the Pharisees saying, "Haven't you read?" and criticized their lack of Scriptural knowledge.

But he told them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?" - Matthew 12:3.

He answered them, "Haven't you read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female' and said, 'That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? - Matthew 19:4-5.

The Lord Jesus also said;

Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken because you don't know the Scriptures or God's power." - Matthew 22:29.

Those who oppose the word of God do not receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If you refuse to obey even a single word, knowing that it is a commandment of God, you will never receive guidance no matter how hard you pray. When you oppose the words of God in the Bible, you are acting against the Holy Spirit. There will be no guidance for

such people, and the Lord is urging us to study the words of God.

He must make a copy of this Law for himself from a scroll. It is to remain with him the rest of his life so he may learn to fear the Lord his God and observe all the words of this Law and these statutes, in order to fulfill them. - Deuteronomy 17:18-19.

Study and read from the book of the Lord: And not one will be missing, each will not long for its mate. For it is the mouth of the Lord that has issued the order, and it is his Spirit that has gathered them. - Isaiah 34:16.

You examine the Scriptures carefully because you suppose that in them you have eternal life. Yet they testify about me. - John 5:39.

These people were more receptive than those in Thessalonica. They were very willing to receive the message, and every day they carefully examined the Scriptures to see if those things were so. - Acts 17:11.

We will be blessed if the word of God has become our joy, delight and life.

Instruction that comes from you is better for me than thousands of gold and silver coins. How I love your instruction! Every day it is my meditation. Your word is very pure, and your servant loves it. - Psalms 119:72, 97, 140.

Your words were found, and I consumed them. Your words were joy and my hearts delight. - Jeremiah 15:16.

Our lives of faith grow according to the amount of the words we consume. It is through the words of God in the Bible that we continue to understand the Lord Jesus. Actually, it is Jesus himself who desperately desires to come deep into our hearts. The Lord Jesus himself has to be the bread of our life.

The Bible was not written to explain any religious principles or doctrines, but it is a book which reveals the word of the Lord, that is to say, the words of the Lord himself. Therefore, although it is actually important for us to read the Bible, we do not do so to study the Scripture or to obtain knowledge of Christianity, so to speak. It is instead to understand the Lord Jesus himself better and to have an intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus rebuked the Pharisees telling them, "You examine the Scriptures carefully because you suppose that in them you have eternal life. Yet they testify about me. But you are not willing to come to me to have life" (John 5:39-40). Actually, reading the

Bible and receiving life are not two different things, and they can't be separated from each other. The Lord reveals himself through the words from the Bible. The Lord is our bread of life, and the words of the Lord have to be our daily bread.

How do we see the Bible? Is it just a cold and lifeless collection of words? Has it become a heavy burden to you? Or, has it become your life? If the living word of God enters into our hearts, we will inevitably receive the true life. If the Bible is merely a collection of laws to follow, or a collection of doctrines to study, it will be nothing but a heavy burden which deprives us of our freedom. Contrarily, if it is true life, it will bring us liberty and joy.

In order to be able to recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we first need to understand that everything exists for the glory of the Lord. Secondly, as the Lord always guides his people according to the word of God and all his works are based on the words in the Bible, we need to consume his words.

Thirdly, we need to keep in mind that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is related to our conscience and rationality.

Our conscience was given to us by the Lord. If, as you are faced with some specific problem, your conscience judges something as unrighteous, you do not need to wait for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Suppose that you are standing at a fork in the road and don't know which way to go. If you feel no peace about stepping into one of the ways, you do not need to seek further guidance.

The rationality we have was given to us by the Lord along with our conscience. So many Christians are lost in their lives and their faith is confused because they have their own intentions confused with the Lord's will. They rely on their own rationality and forget to ask for the guidance of the Lord. Abraham once, at his own decision, fled to Egypt for fear of being starved, where he committed a sin. Through this story, the Bible is warning us about the dangers of acting based on our rationality alone.

Some people believe that rationality is totally useless and it is associated with the flesh. But that is wrong. If rationality occupies the position of a faithful servant inside believers, it can be extremely helpful. Contrarily, when rationality begins to act as a ruler inside believers, it will lead them in the wrong direction. However, if our rationality is governed by the inner-dwelling Holy Spirit, it will help us to understand the Bible, to imbibe the divine truth, and to keep the word of God in our hearts. The Holy Spirit should be the only one who leads us. Rationality is a sort of instrument that transforms the guidance of the Holy Spirit into reality.

When you hit a serious problem, you need to contemplate it from all angles based on your rationality. You need to think rationally about the two questions I mentioned earlier in this article: how the glory of the Lord can be revealed, and whether there are any words in the Bible that can resonate with this situation.

Still sometimes, skipping over rationality, the Holy Spirit speaks directly into your heart: "Pray now!" "Write to this person now," or, "Come to see this brother or that sister right now!" What happened to Philip was a good example of this. Philip proclaimed the word of the Lord in many places in Samaria and he was wonderfully blessed. One day, the Holy Spirit directed Philip to travel into the wilderness. This guidance must have been rationally unacceptable to Philip. And, he must have wondered, "In spite of the many people who are in need of salvation here in Samaria, why do I have to travel into the empty wilderness?" However, when he obeyed the voice of the Holy Spirit and traveled into the wilderness, he met the Ethiopian eunuch, who was led to salvation by him and he could see the glory of the Lord.

Does the Lord delight as much in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the Lord? Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams. - 1 Samuel 15:22.

Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men." - Acts - 5:29.

In these words, we are certainly urged to obey the Lord God rather than our own rationality. When Paul received the revelation from the Son, the Lord Jesus, instead of consulting his blood and flesh; that is to say, instead of following the rationality of men, he obeyed the inspiration from heaven, according to the Bible.

To reveal his Son to me so that I might proclaim him among the gentiles, I did not confer with another human being at any time, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me. Instead, I went away to Arabia and then came back to Damascus. - Galatians 1:16-17.

And so, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. - Acts 26:19.

When we seek the guidance of the Lord, it could also be helpful to ask for the advice of our brothers and sisters. It is for this reason that we are encouraged to gather at meetings regularly. However, we need to be careful about our attitude when we come to the assembly. It is absolutely meaningless to come to the meetings without a deep hunger and thirst for listening to the words of the Lord and seeking his guidance.

"Look! The days are coming," declares the Lord God, "when I will send a famine throughout the land— not a famine of food or a thirst for water— but rather a famine of hearing the words of the Lord." - Amos 8:11.

"But this is the one to whom I will look favorably: to the one who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at my message," declares the Lord. - Isaiah 66:2.

Those who fear and listen to the words of the Lord will receive his abundant guidance.

Fourthly, in order to recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have to understand that the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the purposes of the Lord are deeply connected and cannot be separated from each other. It is most important for us to walk toward the destination of the Lord, being led by the Holy Spirit. If we understand the purposes of the Lord and set them as the destination of our life, we will realize that all things that happen in our lives are working together for our own personal good.

And we know that for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to his purpose, all things are working together for good. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that the Son might be the firstborn among many brothers. - Romans 8:28-29.

The plan of the Lord Jesus for Christians is truly amazing and wonderful. Let us look at the intentions of the Lord, which are summarized in the Epistle to the Colossians. It is written, "For God was pleased to have all of his divine essence inhabit him (Colossians 1:19)." It is also stated that, "the Messiah is all and in all (Colossians 3:11)."

It is important to know that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is directed to churches, in other words, flocks of believers who belong to the Lord Jesus. It is through churches that the purposes of the Lord God are revealed and accomplished.

To the people of Israel, in the era of the Old Testament, the guidance of the Lord was shown in the tabernacle. After Moses fled from Egypt, the Lord gave him detailed instructions on the structure of the tabernacle. Thus, by the hands of people filled with the Holy Spirit, the tabernacle was built exactly as designated by the Lord. Then, the Lord gave spiritual significance to the presence of this tabernacle, through which he attempted to make us understand his guidance. This substantial tabernacle represents the spiritual tabernacle, which signifies the Lord Jesus along with the churches as his body.

For the people of Israel, the tabernacle and the guidance of the Lord were deeply related to each other. Whenever the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire, which symbolized the Holy Spirit, were lifted up, people would set out on their journey. When the pillar of cloud fell, they too stopped with it. This way, the Israelites walked in according to the guidance they received. Just like the pillar of cloud and fire fell down on the tabernacle, the Holy Spirit came down on churches, which represented the body of the Lord Jesus. If we are a church that satisfies the intentions of the Lord, the Lord will be able to lead us at will.

Without the tabernacle that was led by the pillar of cloud, the people of Israel could never have entered the promised land of Canaan. Likewise, we will never get to the fullness of the Lord without churches. Our spirit will never be fulfilled unless we have intimate fellowship with other brothers and sisters in the Lord. The personal guidance of the Lord for each one of us is always, more or less, connected with his own purpose and the church. If the eyes of our hearts are open to the purpose of the Lord, which is to fill us with the same righteousness as the Son of God, and if we realize the fact that churches exist as instruments to accomplish this very purpose, we will be truly blessed. It may sound a little confusing now, so I would like to pick some verses which explain these facts in plain words.

For this reason, since the day we heard about this, we have not stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the full knowledge of God's will with respect to all spiritual wisdom and understanding. - Colossians 1:9.

All the essence of deity inhabits him (Messiah) in bodily form. And you have been filled by him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. - Colossians 2:9-10.

In him there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free person. Instead, the Messiah is all and in all. - Colossians 3:11.

God has put everything under the Messiah's feet and has made him the head of everything for the good of the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills everything in every way. - Ephesians 1:22-23.

....until all of us are united in the faith and in the full knowledge of God's Son, and until we attain mature adulthood and the full standard of development in the Messiah. - Ephesians 4:13.

These verses help us to understand the intentions the Lord has for us. All guidance of the Holy Spirit is deeply related to these purposes of God. What the

Lord is concerned with is not in the dissolution of our sufferings and problems, but it is the will of the Lord to be formed inside us through these events in our lives. What the Lord wants from us is not that we be completely satisfied in this life, but rather, it is his intention to be wholly formed inside us. The Holy Spirit was sent for this very purpose and is willing to guide us.

In the same way, the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, since we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words, and the one who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, for the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will.

And we know that for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to his purpose, all things are working together for good. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that the Son might be the firstborn among many brothers. - Romans 8:26-29.

We have seen the guidance of the Holy Spirit from four different perspectives. When we hit some problems in our lives, let us call to mind these four points and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What is critical when we do so is that we have peace of mind, which is the fifth point.

I once saw a painting in Reader's Digest magazine. It was a painting of one believer of the Lord wandering around in a room just like a raging lion captured in a cage. In the picture, when the believer is asked what was keeping him so busy, he answered, "I have an urgent problem I have to solve immediately and I am all tied up doing it. However, the God remains silent. He just looks so relaxed and seems reluctant to help me."

If you are not clear about the guidance of the Lord, you should stay calm in front of him and wait for his answer, believing in his word, "I will keep my eyes on you and give you my instruction (Psalm 32:8)." The devil always puts pressure on you. Contrarily, the Lord always gives us enough leeway. It is important to cast all troubles we are facing before the Lord as they are and to wait for his voice quietly.

When we are agonizing over something and are constantly preoccupied with that problem, we are depriving the Lord of the chance to work on us. If we entrust our problems to the Lord, and seek the solution from him, the Lord answers abundantly. At the same time, the Holy Spirit will give our spirit conviction and show us the direction in which we should proceed.

It is necessary to be calm in the Lord's presence in

order to sincerely surrender all our troubles to the Lord. It is possible to be silent in the Lord's presence wherever we are, even when we are in a huge crowd or packed train. When we do, it is important to become like little children. Entrust everything to the Lord humbly and never demand an answer from him.

As the servants of the Lord, we are privileged to listen to his voice. It is no surprise, considering that even the servants of men are allowed to listen to the commands of their master.

Even during the time of waiting, we are expected to devote ourselves to fulfill the given missions faithfully. Unless we follow all guidance we have received obediently, the Lord cannot give us the next guidance to lead us further.

There is no universal and certain way to identify the intentions of the Lord. On some occasions, he gives us very clear instructions by letting something happen in our lives. Sometimes, we lose our direction in life because of a sudden change of circumstances and we see another path open in an unexpected direction. It was what happened to Paul. Paul was disrupted while he was preaching in Asia Minor, and he was dispatched on a mission to Europe.

Because they had been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the word in Asia, Paul and Timothy went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. They went as far as Mysia and tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them, so they bypassed Mysia and went down to Troas.

During the night Paul had a vision. A man from Macedonia was standing there and pleading with him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" As soon as he had seen the vision, we immediately looked for a way to go to Macedonia, because we were convinced that God had called us to tell the people there the good news. - Acts 16:6-10.

The Holy Spirit may work on you and lead you through a letter from your friend or some book you read. On some occasions, the Holy Spirit may pick up some words from the Bible in order to guide you on the direction to proceed, telling you that this is the way prepared for you to glorify the Lord. Whatever the way he shows us, the Holy Spirit eventually gives us conviction. When we have that conviction, our souls are dominated by the peace of the Lord himself, which will make all our anxieties and fears disappear.

Let the peace of the Messiah also rule in your hearts, to which you were called in one body, and be thankful. - Colossians 3:15.

The clearest point of all is that whichever way he leads us, there is nobody but the Holy Spirit who can take us there. If we can understand the intentions of the Lord through the guidance of his Holy Spirit, we can accomplish them convinced that they are his intentions.

We will not have to struggle for victory anymore because we already have our victory in the Lord Jesus. All we have to do is, as the ones who have won, to let others share in this victory of the Lord. That was what Abraham did.

Hoping in spite of hopeless circumstances, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," just as he had been told: "This is how many descendants you will have." His faith did not weaken when he thought about his own body (which was already as good as dead now that he was about a hundred years old) or about Sarah's inability to have children, nor did he doubt God's promise out of a lack of faith. Instead, his faith became stronger and he gave glory to God, being absolutely convinced that God would do what he had promised. - Romans 4:18-21.

The Lord Jesus too said;

He told them, "Because of your lack of faith. I tell all of you with certainty, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you. - Matthew 17:20.

### **3. Obedience to the Guidance of the Lord and the Consequences of our Obedience.**

The Holy Spirit has one definite purpose as he leads us. That purpose is to enable the Lord Jesus to become all in all in us and to transform us into the image of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

When the Holy Spirit leads us, he already knows everything about each one of us, unlike human beings. Spiritual growth is only possible when we sincerely obey all the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As long as we are obedient, we will continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit more abundantly. However, the outcome of sincere obedience is not always receiving some special talent or being led into a life of worldly happiness. Although it is clearly promised that the Holy Spirit is given to all those who sincerely obey, the presence of the Holy Spirit is not welcomed by our old self, that is to say, by our innate nature. John said, "He will absolutely be increased and I will be decreased" (John 3:30). It is not an easy thing to wipe out our old nature, destroy our old self and move down into the valley of humbleness.



Basically, to surrender our control to the Holy Spirit is something that goes against our innate nature. When we are led by the Holy Spirit, very often it exposes the ugliness of our nature, such as in our habit of justifying ourselves, aptitude toward vice, unforgiving attitudes, nature to seek attention from others, and so on.

When the Lord Jesus sincerely obeyed his Father God, in consequence, he was isolated, falsely accused and finally crucified. If we walk obediently according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will have to suffer a great deal, just like the Lord Jesus, his disciples and so many saints did.

This was how Jesus prayed before he was crucified;

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, which you gave me because you loved me before the creation of the world. - John 17:14, 24.

Moreover, after he was raised to heaven, the Lord Jesus called upon us from above saying;

To the one who conquers I will give a place to sit with me on my throne, just as I have conquered and have sat down with my Father on his throne. - Revelation 3:21.

If the Holy Spirit leads us so that we can testify sincerely that we are in harmony with Jesus, just like Paul did, we will be truly blessed.

For "Who has known the mind of the Lord so that he can advise him?" However, we have the mind of the Messiah. - 1 Corinthians 2:16.

When we can express our feelings with these same words, the Holy Spirit will lead us further to reach the Lord Jesus sitting on the throne.

End