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Deciphering God's Direction

In the ongoing transformation of my soul, I have found that my most admirable enemy is my emotions. Emotion is the most powerful attribute of the soul, for it can even challenge the will. I also found out something else about emotion: When it is transformed, it stops fighting you and begins instead to serve you.

Over the years, I've taken enough baths in God's "transformation liquid" to know how to keep the wrong kind of emotion from operating against me. For the most part, my emotions are now only activated in response to the things in life that are true, honest, and of good report (Philippians 4:8). I no longer allow my emotions to speak out about the negative things in my life.

If you are desiring to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in your life, you must understand that the inner witness is heard when the ground of the heart is calm. It's hard for you to recognize the Holy Spirit's inner witness pointing you in the right direction with His peace when your whole world is flying apart! Therefore, one of the first big steps to following the leadership of the Holy Spirit and accurately hearing His voice is to cultivate your ground with peace.

People often ask me, "How can I hear God? How do I know what He wants me to do? How do I know where He wants me to go?"

Sometimes when someone tells me that he's going to do something or go somewhere, I know exactly what's going to happen if he follows that course. This is will take him out of the Word especially true when I know that the person's action will take him out of the Word and the walk of the Spirit.

For instance, while talking about the leadership of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8, the apostle Paul says, *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live* (v. 13). This lets me know that the Holy Spirit would never lead a person to a place where he isn't mortifying the deeds of the body. When the Holy Spirit leads, He will always lead us out of a walk dominated by flesh and into a walk of the Spirit.

Here's another example: Someone might say to me, "The Holy Spirit told me to start attending that dead church so I can help change it."

My response is usually something like, "No, He didn't, because you're weaker than they are!"

"But I'm supposed to go."

"No, you're not - you're supposed to get strong yourself. Think about it. What have you done for God

this year?"

"Well, the truth is, I just barely made it to church on time."

"And you're going to go over there and change that operation? Wake up and think about what you're saying!"

Another person once told me, "God told me to go down to the barbershop and witness to the barber while I get a haircut. But there was just one problem - when I got to the barbershop, it was closed! Can you tell me why God sent me down there?"

"I sure can," I answered. "God didn't send you to the barbershop. He doesn't make mistakes. He knows when that barbershop is open and when it's closed, and He wouldn't have sent you there with instructions you couldn't carry out!"

I've had others tell me that God was sending them to a certain city and that they were going to cause revival to break out. But after going to the city and failing miserably, they'd come back and asked me why they failed.

My reply was simple: "You failed because God didn't send you. That isn't how He works. If you're too weak spiritually to do what He says, He isn't going to send you."

How do we avoid making mistakes like the ones I just mentioned? By becoming more sensitive to the different ways that the Holy Spirit leads us.

There are four primary ways God communicates with His children. First and foremost is the inner witness. Second, He communicates by speaking to us directly in our spirits. Third, He communicates to us by means of a vision. Fourth, He communicates by revelation.

When God communicates through this last method, you might just be walking along with no special purpose in mind when all of a sudden, He downloads a revelation. The revelation might be a mystery of Christ; specific direction on how to take your business from the bottom to the top; or wisdom on how to win in the situation you are facing. God will download a spiritual "computer chip" with the entire revelation and then send it over to your spirit and release the program all at once. Suddenly by revelation, you will know what to do, even though you won't know how you know.

Sometimes three seconds of revelation will pass through my spirit, and it will take me two months to preach it out. God loves to communicate that way, because our spirits are capable of operating in His class. When He communicates to us by revelation, He can say an entire three months' worth of truths in a milligram of a second, and we have the capacity to understand. Of course, God also communicates just by speaking to us at our own speed in our own language, but that isn't what He prefers.

Let me stop here to reassure you: You are worth too much to God for Him to lead you by impulses you can never be quite sure of. He doesn't want you to wonder, *Should I do it, or should I not?* He

doesn't want you to be even more confused tomorrow than you were today because a strong impulse to take a certain action has become weak overnight.

You're worth a whole lot more to God than an impulse that comes and goes. But to get beyond that type of leading, you must understand that divine direction grows like a tree. All you have to do is keep watering it and then wait for the tree to grow. If you're not sure about whether or not you should take an action, don't do it. Just wait until that direction grows into a solid knowing on the inside.

Someone might say, "But I'm in a crisis situation! I can't wait that long to know what to do!"

God knows all about the situations we're facing. However, He may wait to focus on what got us in our mess in the first place!

People sometimes say, "Don't condemn me!" or "Don't judge me!" when I talk about the need for change in their lives. But if a person is blatantly sinning or going in a direction that is obviously harmful to him, how do I run from the bad fruit falling off his tree? How can I talk about the true kind of victory that God has made available to us without also teaching on what brings about that victory?

God loves to work on our problems. He especially loves to show us how to abort the problems we are causing ourselves before we ever encounter them. Therefore, a great deal of His leadership in our lives will deal with those kinds of issues. He will endeavor to fellowship with us at the beginning of any problem to give us the opportunity to avoid a potential mess altogether.

This is why I can say that direction is like a tree that grows bigger and bigger until it reaches its full stature. Even though we don't like to go through a crisis, we must keep on spending time in God's Presence even in the midst of a difficult time, worshiping Him and waiting for the direction we need to grow on the inside. Then no matter what is happening around us, we can rest in the knowledge that God will intervene and cause His purposes to come to pass as we yield to His leadership in the situation.

And if you miss His direction in a certain situation, remember - your life is very important to God. You mean everything to Him. He loves you, and He doesn't condemn you for failing. However, He wants you to go to school regarding the failure and ask Him, "What can I do differently next time?" He likes it when you do that. Meanwhile, His direction will just keep growing and growing like a tree as long as you keep nourishing it through fellowship with Him.

Personally, although I love the divine communication that comes by revelation, it is far more common for me to walk by the inner witness. This is true with all believers, for it is the primary way God communicates with His children.

The inner witness is our truest and best friend whenever we take a step in the wrong direction. It takes place in our conscience as the Holy Ghost bears witness to the truth about any given situation.

The problem is, many people sear their conscience so much that the Holy Spirit has nothing in which

to bear witness. Often a person begins this singeing process over the issue of money, telling himself that the end justifies the means. For instance, a minister might use questionable tactics to raise money for his ministry and then say, "But look how much I'm doing for God." But he needs to examine the ethics he is using to conduct his ministry and then choose to die to any kind of fleshly program that sears his conscience to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Generally the searing process takes place gradually, desensitizing the conscience by one small "singeing" at a time. At some point, however, the person loses the use of his conscience -thus losing the closest and best friend he could ever have to guide him away from taking a step in the wrong direction.

But I have some good news for you! Even if you have seared your conscience in the past, you can do something about it today. If you will start praying habitually in the Holy Spirit, you're going to have a hard time getting your conscience off your back until the transformation of your soul is complete!

Someone might say, "I tried that praying in tongues, but it didn't work."

When I hear that, I ask, "Can you tell me exactly how much you've been praying?" The person will respond, saying that his prayer times have been lasting for a certain amount of time. However, I'll often find out later that the reason that person didn't receive the benefit of praying in tongues was that he never really did it consistently.

I remember one man whose case just baffled me. He would tell me that he was praying in the Holy Spirit a great deal every day. Yet he never seemed to gain the victory in different areas of his life, and for fourteen years I wondered why. But then circumstances changed so that I was able to observe this man's life up close. And once he was under my nose where I could scrutinize his lifestyle, the mystery cleared up within the first six months. I realized he wasn't doing what he had been saying he was doing all that time!

You can't turn the Holy Spirit loose purposely in your spirit without His changing you. He'll start going after everything that is against your call and its equipping - everything that is against God's direction and His plan for your life. And if you're seared in conscience, that dry tongue of yours will be the first thing He will use to help you start coming alive unto God again!

"Do you mean I can pray even when I'm as dry as cracker juice?"

Many of us have proven that to be true!

"But what if I don't feel anything?"

It makes no difference; you're not the one who is ordering what you are saying. As long as the prayer you are praying out of your spirit is being authored by God, it doesn't matter how dry it is. It will still produce the same good results in your life. Why is this so? Because the feelings you add to your prayer don't change the content of what you are praying in the Holy Ghost.

"But how long should I pray? What if I pray in tongues for three hours?" Then you will activate three

hours of divine mysteries prayed through you by the Holy Spirit for your life.

"Well, what if I pray only five minutes?" Then you'll reap the benefit of five minutes' worth of those divine mysteries.

I've been asked all those questions about praying in tongues - and many more! For instance, someone else asked me, "Will praying in tongues build me up as soon as I start praying?"

I replied, "Yes, but that doesn't always mean God will immediately bring to pass what you are praying. Just keep praying in the Holy Spirit, knowing that God is working it out in His time."

As I said, if you have a dead conscience, that's the first thing He'll wake up. Things will start bothering you. What is that process called? Edification.

When I first started this transformation process, I thought edification just meant that I'd feel good while praying in the Holy Ghost but that the rest of my life would be left alone. But the Holy Spirit DIDN'T leave the rest of me alone. When I started praying in tongues, He started working with my conscience and with everything else that could hinder the fulfillment of God's plan for me. The mortification process spoken of in Romans 8:13 had begun in earnest in my life.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

I can tell you from personal experience -the Holy Spirit will really go after those hindrances in your life when you yield to His leadership through praying in tongues. He will make you into someone who can't settle down in a city without believing for revival. You will no longer be able to settle for a new car - you'll want the entire city!

Mortification takes place in all three realms: spirit, soul, and body. The apostle Paul refers to this process in Second Corinthians 7:1: *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

Regarding the body, the Holy Spirit will begin to deal with the filthiness of the flesh - all those fleshly habits that hold us in bondage. Regarding the soul, He will deal with such negative forces as hatred, emulations, and strife. As I once told someone who was in strife with another person, "I know how you feel about him right now. But if you'll keep praying in the Holy Spirit, one day you'll pray yourself to a place where you'd do anything to avoid blocking that person from coming into the Kingdom."

The third area the Holy Spirit starts working on is the filthiness of spirit, which refers to wrong believing. No dead-limb doctrine is going to survive a habitual, fervent prayer life in the Holy Spirit, because praying in tongues is a revelation gift. As we allow the Holy Spirit to pray divine mysteries through us, we will continually increase in revelation knowledge of God's Word until our wrong beliefs are all replaced by truth.

Romans 8:26 reveals to us the key role that the Holy Spirit plays as we pray in tongues: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

When we don't know how to pray as we ought, the Holy Spirit steps in with groanings that cannot be uttered. Verse 27 goes on to say; *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Why did Paul say "the will of God" instead of "the plan of God"? Because in each dispensation, God has a mind for that dispensation and the people who live in it. Therefore, not only does the Holy Spirit know the entire divine plan from the beginning to the end, but He also knows God's mind for your generation, for your city, for your church, and for your individual call. This knowledge enables the Holy Spirit to make intercession for you according to the will of God.

Then comes the classic verse that says, *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (v. 28).* So because the Holy Spirit knows the overall purpose of God, He can then make intercession for you to fulfill your individual role in that divine purpose. And as the Holy Ghost is working out the plan of God in your life, you can know that all things work together for your good because you love God and are called according to His purpose.

Do you see the strong connection between the leadership of the Holy Spirit and praying in tongues? Now consider what would happen if you decided to spend some extended time alone with God, worshiping Him and praying in tongues. The mind of Christ would be loosed to implement God's plan in your life, even if that plan included mortifying your flesh and dealing with your wrong believing. If you need a miracle, it might also include you receiving your miracle so you can go on to fulfill whatever God has called you to do on this earth.

But whatever God's plan is pertaining to you, understand this: When the mind of Christ guides the prayer you are praying, it would take an act of rebellion on your part not to discover that plan. You see, God WANTS to communicate with you in such a way that you have no doubt about what He is saying.

Jude 1:19-21 includes some foundational truths along this line. Verse 19 starts out talking about those who are carnally-minded: *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.* Then Jude changes the focus from "they" to "you": *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.*

In other words, God doesn't put us in the same class with the sense-ruled, separated ones who have not the Holy Spirit. Jude is saying, "You are not those who are sensual and who separate themselves, having not the Spirit. You have the Holy Spirit and can therefore build yourself up!"

We build ourselves up on our most holy, God-obtained faith, far above the sense-dominated mess we have lived in for too long - that realm where we are moved more by what we see, hear, and feel than by God and His Word. How do we build ourselves up above that mess? BY PRAYING IN THE

HOLY GHOST.

I like what the next verse says: Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (v. 21). We can't leave out that divine instruction! How do we keep ourselves in the love of God? By allowing the Holy Spirit to edify our new nature, bringing it forward so that every dark, controlling area in our lives is flooded with His light.

The truth is, you cannot pray in tongues without lighting the candle of your spirit. That is when the internal war begins! Why? Because the flesh doesn't like its deeds exposed to the light. The flesh is just like those little cockroaches that live in cheap motels. When the light is turned on, they scurry for cover. They love the cover of darkness.

So it is when you turn the light on your soul by praying in tongues. The one thing you cannot do is habitually pray in tongues and stay the same, for at each level of edification, the areas of darkness in your life will be exposed by the Holy Spirit. As you yield to His leadership, He will help you deal with each area that needs to be transformed.

This transformation process through praying in tongues isn't always easy, but I urge you never to give up on it. After all, it is your most effective way to: 1) cultivate the ground of your heart with peace so you can discern the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, and 2) make your emotions your servant rather than your most potent enemy. If you want to enjoy a walk of victory and power in this life, nothing is more important than achieving these two goals!

Blessings,
Dave Roberson