

Leadings

by Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer

Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer discusses how to discern true leadings from God versus false impressions from other sources.

Scripture: Psalm 32:8, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 30:21, James 3:17, 1 John 4:1

Topics: "Discerning God", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer, an American evangelist, delves into the topic of impressions and 'leadings' from the Lord, highlighting the differences between true impressions from God and false impressions from the devil. He emphasizes that impressions from God are gentle, patient, and withstand scrutiny, while those from the devil are urgent, evasive, and accompanied by a sense of hurry. Shelhamer provides five signs to discern clear leadings from God, including alignment with the Word, the Spirit's direction, providential circumstances, seeking Christian counsel, and appealing to good common sense.

Transcript

Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer (1869-1940) was an American, an evangelist with the Free Methodists in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries. He wrote many practical and forceful tracts and pamphlets and also a few books. His autobiography is a classic and well worth the read. This piece is an excellent number on the subject of impressions and "leadings" from the Lord, a subject that confuses many souls. It comes from his book *False Doctrines And Fanaticism Exposed* being taken from the chapters on fanaticism. This is actually only one half of the section on impressions.

The Difference Between True and False Impressions

Impressions may come from God, yourself, or the devil. Let us notice some distinguishing features and manifestations.

Impressions from the devil are, as a rule, very strong and imperative at first, but upon deliberate investigation, become more uncertain and sometimes absurd. On the other hand, those from God may be very gentle and unassuming at first, but by being put to the test, become fixed and established.

Impressions from beneath are always accompanied by a hurry spirit, such as, "you must do it now, or never; if you hesitate, you will lose your opportunity and fearful consequences may follow." Not so with impressions from above. God allows plenty of time to consider and be fully persuaded. Should you miss

one opportunity while honestly confused, He can give you another just as good.

Impressions from Satan are usually accompanied by an unteachable, unyielding spirit while those from God will patiently bear and survive contradictions and misrepresentations from friends or foes.

Impressions or leadings from beneath are generally evasive and impatient at the thought of a thorough investigation, while those from God are open and free from deception.

Impressions from a pseudo-religious demon have a strangeness and weirdness about them, while those from God are free from anything that is "wonderful" and far-fetched.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."

Five Signs of Clear Leadings

When a leading or impression is from God it will harmonize in at least five respects, namely:

1. The plain teaching of the Word--not a single passage, here and there, but the general teaching and tenor of the Scriptures.
2. The clear direction of the Spirit. He never contradicts or despises any portion of the Word. He never repudiates former leadings that were clear and satisfactory. He never becomes agitated or in a hurry.
3. Providences. Circumstances and openings will help point in the right direction. You need not knock a door down nor pry it open to do the will of God. "I will guide thee with mine eye."
4. Christian counsel. When God is leading, you are safe in conferring and seeking advice from those who are spiritual and faithful to your soul. But it is a bad sign if you avoid these and prefer to keep your plans hidden, or go to those who will pamper and humor you.
5. Good common sense. God never forces one to do indecent and outrageous things. All He demands will appeal to sound reason, purity of life and honesty with your fellowmen.

Duty calls in but one direction at a time. When there is confusion and uncertainty as to which course to take, the proper thing to do is to hold still and do nothing, absolutely nothing. God does not require you to decide or act until the mist clears away. When there are but two things left to do, do not pursue either course until you feel equally clear to abandon one or the other. To insure Divine guidance always be sure of aiming at just one thing--the glory of God. When there is no unsanctified ambition or self-interest at stake and God knows it, the soul can afford to wait His time and then unhesitatingly move forward.

Thomas Upham says:

"Those impulses and impressions which are from God are of a peaceful and gentle character. They lay a wholesome restraint upon the mind and hold it in a state of deep solemnity and of attentive stillness.

"Impressions and impulses which are not from the Holy Spirit, but from some other source, such as a disordered imagination, the world or the devil, are not of that peaceful and quiet character, which has been mentioned, but are hasty and violent."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/elmer-ellsworth-shelhamer/leadings/>

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