

How to Be 'Led by the Spirit'

by Shane Idleman

To be truly led by the Spirit, one must be surrendered to God's will, humble, and willing to listen to the right voice.

Duration: 52:07

Scripture: Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 30:21, Matthew 7:7-8, John 10:27, Acts 12:20-24, Acts 13:2-4, Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:16, James 1:5

Topics: "Being Led by the Spirit", "Humility and Obedience"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of being led by the Holy Spirit, highlighting that true guidance comes from listening to God's voice and aligning our actions with His will. He illustrates this through biblical examples, stressing the need for humility, prayer, fasting, and obedience to God's Word. Idleman warns against self-exaltation and the dangers of listening to the wrong voices, urging believers to actively seek God's direction in their lives. He encourages the congregation to open their ears to hear the Spirit's leading and to engage in ministry as a way to discern God's will. Ultimately, he calls for a deep, personal relationship with God to truly be led by the Spirit.

Transcript

How to be led by the Spirit. Don't most of you know how to be led by the Spirit? I'm assuming, right? There might be a few over there saying, we kind of snuck in, we're just waiting for breakfast later. But most of you want to be led by the Spirit.

It's interesting, the Bible says, led by the Spirit. David actually said by the Spirit. People were filled by the Spirit.

Revealed by the Holy Spirit. Taught by the Holy Spirit. Moved by the Holy Spirit.

Actually, the way we got our Bible is people were moved by the Holy Spirit. So being led by the Holy Spirit is probably one of the most important things you can pursue and consider. Now, I believe that God's grace is strong.

He's watching over many people. He loves those who love Him. He died for the whole world.

And I think in His sovereignty and His grace, He allows things. He guides us to a certain degree. But there's a deeper understanding of God when you're led by His Spirit.

You know, I need to go there. I need to be direct. I don't need to make that decision.

We don't need to go there. We don't need to. And you're led of His Spirit.

And that was the book of Acts. They were led by the Spirit of God. Now, here's how important it is to hear the right voice.

Connor, I'm glad you're here this morning. Can I use you as an example? We were in a softball game Friday. And I was not on Connor's team.

And he was running to second. I got the ball behind him. I said, Connor, take three.

Take three. Go to third. Go to third.

And he starts going to third, and I just threw him out. And he gets back to the dugout. He goes, I can't believe it.

He's a pastor. He's telling me all this wrong information. He's telling me this is not right.

This is not mom, dad. What happened? I'm listening to pastor told me. And I said, hold on.

Go back to second. Right? Go back. It's an example, though.

Listen to the right voice. Right? I'm not on your team. I'm not on your team.

But you're a pastor. But there's a lot of pastors filled with the wrong voice. Make sure it lines up with Scripture.

Make sure it lines up with the truth of God's Word. Are you led by the right voice? Because it's very destructive if you're not. And something I like to read up on often, as you know, is America's history.

Back when my family tradition holds. I can't find it. I've tried to research it.

That my lineage is traced back to Purgum White, who was the first baby born on the Mayflower when it was stationed there in Cape Cod Bay. And it's a nice family tradition. I hope it's true.

So I like to read the pilgrims and the Puritans and a lot of that rich history. And something I came across many years ago, and I was reminded of it this week, is it was called the Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647. The Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647.

42, maybe, right in there. But what happened is they... Well, you can read it. It's in Old English or King James, so it's kind of hard.

But it talks about that Old Deluder Satan wanting to pervert people and get them off the straight path. For every township that has over 50 families, we're going to pay a tax so somebody can teach the children the Word of God. That was actually the foundation of the public school system.

Did you know that? The school system was founded to teach the Word of God to the kids. Many parents couldn't read or write. Sometimes the dad was in the field from sunup to sundown.

And although I believe it's a parent's primary responsibility, obviously, to teach the children, this was a good concept. They would teach kids the Word of God from a very young age. So be careful.

Are you listening to the right voice? And we're in Acts 12, verse 20. Acts 12, verse 20. What amazes me about the book of Acts, and I often pray when I get to the book of Acts and I stumble on these verses, is, Lord, help me in this area.

I want to know. It would say, Paul was led by the Spirit. Paul was forbidden by the Spirit.

It's almost like your whole life is just led by the Spirit. You know, God wants me to go here. He stops me from going here.

And I think sometimes we look, oh, that was for them, but I believe it's for us as well. I believe a person can wake up and say, Lord, lead me today. I want you to guide me.

I want to hear your voice, and I'm going to impart to you many things that you have heard before, some you may not have heard before. But I'm hoping it helps. Acts 12, 20.

Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace because their country was supplied with food by the king's country. So on a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, The voice of a God and not a man.

The voice of a God and not a man. And Herod had an opportunity right then to stop them or to take the praise. Because we see the same thing going ahead in the book of Acts.

The apostles do some mighty miracles, and they say the gods are among us. And they say, no, we're just men like you. They took the glory away from themselves and put it back on God.

That's where it goes. So be careful of self-exaltation. It's very destructive.

So the voice of a God and not a man. Herod could have quieted them or he embraced it. Thank you.

Thank you. And what happened? The voice of a God and not a man. Then immediately, immediately an angel of the Lord struck him.

And because he did not give glory to God, he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God grew and multiplied. Now, I could get a little gross right here, but I won't.

But you can read on parasites and worms and eating certain things called sushi that aren't cooked. And there are things that this will happen. Trust me, I don't want to get too gross in this service, but it is an interesting concept and it can happen.

Also Josephus, he was in his book Antiquities. He wrote that King Herod had tremendous pain, and five days later he died. The insides came out.

So not only does the Bible say it, but also history shows that this is what happened to Herod. Now, I want to pull in one point, how to be led by the Spirit, because this is where it all starts. You must open your ears to hear the leading of the Spirit.

You must open your ears to hear. Jesus said, whoever has ears to hear, let them hear. And can you imagine people saying, are you crazy? Are you out of your mind? Jesus, of course we have ears.

What do you call these? Okay, but that doesn't mean you can hear. Open the ears of your understanding. Can you hear the voice of God? So you have to say, Lord, I want to open my ears.

Lord, open my ears. I want to hear from you, because the humble, he teaches his way. We are bombarded with opportunities just like Herod.

We are bombarded with opportunities of self-exaltation. Aren't we? Our job, accomplishing things. You're such a good this, and you're such a good that.

And Herod just ties it in perfectly with the first point I wanted to make. Be careful of self. Because when I want to exalt self, am I being led of the Spirit? Let me just say no.

If you're not, no. If you're not, no. Anytime let's exalt Shane, I'm not led of the Spirit.

And I'm obviously careful in this area, because all of us can fall prey to this, right? We have radio stations. San Francisco emailed me this week. We want to put your messages.

We've got to get this message out to people. And we have it going now more in Ventura, Orange County, Riverside. The elders agree.

But it's not about self-exaltation. Don't point them to Christ, not Shane. It's Westside Christian, not Shane.

And Lord, what do you want to do? Do you want to lead us in this area? Do you want to expand? What's that look like? We have to exalt you. So it's a constant battle of I don't want to be exalted. Lord, I want you to be exalted.

What does that look like? And then we don't make decisions. Now, before you clap, it's still in here though, right? Isn't self-exalt still in here? It's still in here, but you've got to starve it. And you put it to sleep.

And you say, it's not about me, God. It's about you. See, it's very easy to say it, but very hard to do it.

And God knows the heart. And what He often does when things like that is I get humbled by another email. Or humbled by another.

Or my kids come in. Daddy, you take out the trash. The dog threw up.

You know, it's just constant. Oh, you're not all that. So God uses this balancing act many times to keep us humble.

But you have to open your ears to hear the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is why I speak about humility so often. Because pride is behind self-exaltation.

And before you start going, yeah, yeah, you guys got to watch it. No, you guys got to watch it too. Because there's a spirit of self-exaltation everywhere.

How many people want to get promoted? Or look better? Or whatever. And it's a spirit of self-exaltation. I've noticed it.

So when somebody wants to be led of the Spirit, if it's all about you and your exaltation and what you're accomplishing and trying to push your agenda. Have you heard the phrase jockeying for position? That's what jockeys do. No, no, no.

They're jockeying the other horse and they're kicking the other horse and they're jockeying. But you can't have that in the Christian community. God will promote you.

God will exalt you. God will put you on a worship team. God will make you a worship leader.

God will make you a pastor. God will put you in ministry. God will open a ministry door for you.

God opens those doors when you humble yourself and let Him lead you by His Spirit. So this is very important. But while we're here, let's take a quick test.

Do you need help in this area? Here's a key if you do. Do you always make excuses when you're challenged? Are you always right? Do you throw temper tantrums? You don't listen to others. You've got a rebellious spirit.

Then there's a good chance. Here's a tragedy. This person thinks they are being led of the Spirit.

And then you start to challenge them on anything, they get a temper tantrum. I knew that would be a hard one. They get upset, right? And pride.

They don't want to be told what to do. I always have excuses. But I'm led of the Spirit.

No, you're not. You're led with arrogance and pride. Be careful here.

And then verse 25. Barnabas and Saul, led of the Spirit, right? Returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry. And I believe all of you in this room, because we read.

I even read and I go, Paul and Barnabas, well, that's them. That doesn't apply to me. They wrote the book of Acts.

They started the church. And be careful because can't you do that too? Well, that's them. But no, that's you.

Fulfilled your ministry. We have ministries all over that we need help with. I can plug you in wherever you're gifted.

Trust me. I just talked to Phil yesterday. Why don't we, instead of going with the church in Lancaster to go minister to the homeless, why don't we start something and bring food? Why not? Now, it's not about, well, can't we get along? Sure, let's be united.

Let's do things. But sometimes God calls a distinct and different group to go out and be involved together as a congregation. Hospital homes, oh my.

Don't let me get started on that. So fulfilled your ministry. It doesn't say they're fulfilled their preaching or fulfilled their this.

All of us can be involved in ministry. And that's one of my passions is it's not just showing up for church and then we go home and then we show up for church and we go home. That's the jumpstart.

You take the jumper cables and you jumpstart the battery. That's all. You still gotta drive the car and go out and be involved in ministry.

So we can plug you in. There's not a week that goes by that we don't get calls from the office. Can anybody talk to this single mom? Can anybody help this person out in Rosemont? Can anybody talk to this person about prayer requests? Can anybody, I'm like, I'm bombarded.

We got a few people, but who else can help in this area? So there's a ministry opportunity everywhere if you're open. So they were fulfilling their ministry and they took with them John whose name was Mark. So I want to stop here for a minute too because this is important in regard to being led of the Spirit.

Throughout the book of Acts you'll notice something. As they moved, ministered to the Lord, prayed, waited, as they moved they were led. So it's an important principle.

Always be moving in the right direction. See if I didn't know what to do, like I don't know what school to go to, I don't know what college, I don't know if I should quit this job, take this job, I don't know if I should... You fill in the blank, right? If it were me, I would just start serving somewhere. No, that doesn't answer my question.

No, but see it positions you in the right direction. God can't steer what's not moving. Those cars aren't going anywhere in the parking lot until turn the key and you start steering.

So I've noticed I want to be led of the Spirit, but people sit on the couch, spend four hours a day TV, eating too much, drinking too much, and I'm not being led of the Spirit. Right? He leads those who are moving in the right direction. Once you... That's how I... And I say this often, I apologize, I don't like when pastors tell the same story often, but I was at the other building, I was cleaning their toilets and cleaning up babies who threw up on the floor before I started preaching.

Many... Lord, what do you want me to do? I don't know. Well, here's what we need you to do. Walk to the parking lot, do security.

We need you to clean this bathroom when we're done. Okay, I'll do that. And I'm doing this, and God starts opening other doors.

He guides us by leading because that's faithful in the little things. Have you ever heard that principle? Be faithful in the little things. So many times God will lead you to a certain thing by serving, by serving others.

I've seen people serve others and serving, and they make contacts they would have never made contact for a job opportunity or this opportunity simply by serving. So, because I think it's a concept we think, well, when I'm led of the Spirit then I'll serve. Or when I'm led of the Spirit then I'll do something.

But usually God wants you to step out and start doing what we all know what to do, right? We know what direction to be moving. As we're moving in that direction God begins to empower us. That's what the disciples did.

And they moved in the right direction. I just think it's impossible to be led of the Spirit if we're not moving and doing something. And then Acts 13 we go right into chapter 13.

Now in the church that was in Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers. Oh, interesting. We use the word teacher nowadays but we don't like the word prophet.

Right? Oh, gosh. So many negative things come up to some of your minds maybe some of you it doesn't. But the church had a healthy balance of prophets and teachers.

Now my stance I believe that the West Side Christian Fellowship what we believe is this might help to clarify some things for you. We don't believe in or at least I should say I because I'm not speaking for everybody in a capital P prophet. The Mormon Church has their prophets and they speak things that supersede Scripture.

The papacy I believe the Pope would be considered the Roman Catholic Church would call him a living prophet that they can say things that kind of can supersede Scripture. We believe that Scripture has been fulfilled canonization of Scripture it's been complete. There are no people that are going to speak in addition to or over God's Word.

That they all the prophets the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. So anything has to come underneath God's revealed Word already. I mean that's just not even because then where do you stop? I mean oh this person said this so we don't have to believe this anymore.

So it's finalized it's done however I believe in the motivational gift of prophecy. People being able to speak boldly or prophetically into the lives of other people. Preaching many times can be prophetic.

So it's a supernatural enablement to speak God's Word powerfully. And we still believe that's why Paul said pastors, teachers, prophets, evangelists that gifting. And I've seen that some people I can name churches and I won't but the pastor is gifted as a teacher.

You know he's just let's open Neal and here's our Greek and Hebrew and the history and the grammar and the historical context and it's teaching. You have to have teaching. You have to have teaching.

But you also have to have the preaching. Because the teaching tells me what I need to do the preaching motivates me to go do it. So they have the prophet and the teacher.

Those who have been called to preach much like the prophets in the Old Testament will confront, compromise, condemn moral digression and powerfully denounce sin in the hope of reconciling man to God. Teachers say here's what to do prophet. The prophetic says here go and do it.

And you have to have a mixture of both of those. Basically the teacher builds the preacher tears. The teacher counsels the preacher convicts.

The teacher rejoices the preacher weeps. The teacher plants the preacher uproots. The teacher mends and the preacher breaks.

The teacher is full of hope the preacher is full of fire. The teacher loves to listen but the preacher needs to speak. So you have a healthy balance of both.

Leonard Ravenhill wrote in his book Why Revival Tarries? And I'll just tell you up front don't read that book if you're easily offended. Why Revival Tarries? He said God has always had His specialists whose chief concern has been the moral breakdown of the nation and the church. Such men were Elisha, Jeremiah, Malachi and others of their kind who appeared at critical moments in history to reprove, rebuke, and exhort in the name of God and righteousness.

Such a man is likely to be drastic and radical. The curious crowd that gathers to watch him will soon brand him as extreme, fanatical, and negative. And in a sense, they are right for he cannot turn off the burden of the Holy Ghost.

See, a preacher's goal that prophetic gifting that goal is to align the heart of the person with the heart of God. And sometimes that's not easy, is it? People don't want to hear it. That's one of the most amazing things we hear about West Side Christian Fellowship.

I'll just open up for a minute here. The number one reason that we hear why people come here is they say, I was not being fed elsewhere. Or I was just not being fed.

I was dying. And the number one people leave is I was offended. I can't handle that guy anymore.

I can't drink my beer. I can't smoke my cigarettes. I can't look at my porn.

I'm not going to listen to that guy anymore. So you have this, I'm not being fed. The problem is they don't have ears to hear.

You have to want to hear what God's Word says. And you have to be hungry for the things of God. To be led by the Spirit of God.

So take this test. You say, I love Jesus, but I'm not empowered by the Holy Spirit. I love Jesus, but I don't want people telling me what to do.

I love Jesus, but I also love the things of the world. You are not being led by God's Spirit as much as you think you are. If this is the case.

And I just care for you enough to tell you the truth. This applies to me as well as it does to you. This is applicable to all of us.

To be truly led to the Spirit, you have to be surrendered to the work of the Spirit. So here's the next point. Chapter 13, still, verse 2. As they minister to the Lord.

Okay, here it goes. They're back to ministering to the Lord. As they minister to the Lord.

And, you guys ready for this Word? I don't think you are. Some of you are. Fasted.

What's wrong with these guys? I can't even go a couple weeks without hearing this Word. Somebody said, when are we hearing a full sermon on it? Trust me, it's coming soon. Because I'm getting so fed up of hearing this Word in a good way, that I just want to tell you what the benefits are.

It's amazing benefits. As they minister to the Lord and fast it. Here's the problem with many people.

As they minister to the Lord, and that's it. See, I won't make it to the hospital homes if I stop by Claim Jumper and get a big all-you-can-eat buffet and that big chocolate cake that says, Hi, I'm heading home. I'm just telling you the truth.

I'm heading home. Jesse, I would not sit there for an hour and a half. I'm tired.

I've got to go. That's what fasting does. It starves the flesh.

That's one reason I have to do it all weekend so I can get here. I'm so hungry, but I'm so full of God. Ministering and fasting go together.

I mean, the Bible says this, so don't get mad at me. Show me Scripture that says it's over today. People email me.

They say, Shane, that doesn't apply anymore. Really? Jesus said, when you give and when you pray and when you fast. And all throughout the book of Acts, all I see is people following the Lord, ministering to the Lord, and fasting.

You've got a problem with fasting. It's a problem. And you know what? I do, too.

I don't like it. If God, if you could just remove fasting out of all, that's the one I would have Him remove. If He could remove any spiritual discipline, Lord, keep prayer, keep self-discipline, keep perseverance, keep all these things, but get fasting out of the way.

Remove that one because that's often the most powerful because it's got the deepest hold on us. The Holy Spirit said, the Holy Spirit said. Some people might say, what is He talking? How's the Holy Spirit? Let me say this real quick.

This might help. When I say a word, let's say word, word, how do you know I'm saying word? Because sound vibrations are going through the air, word. You hear, it picks up your eardrum, the inner ear receives it, sends a signal to your brain.

When you were young, you learned what these words and pronunciations meant. That's why we can speak. This is no different.

It's deep calling unto deep. So as I'm waiting on God, wanting to hear His word, praying, it's deep calling unto deep. I would submit to you that I often hear from God just as much as I hear from somebody else.

Speaking, not audibly like, Shane, go do this, but this is sensing and this holy, I can't just remove this. God, what are you doing in my heart? I'm thinking about all day long and you're confirming things. You're convicting.

There's this deep inside, calling deep, God, is this what you want me to do? And I know my flesh, so I often throw tests out there. God, show me. Confirm it.

That's why it's good to wait on God so you're not rushing ahead, Lord. And it's this deep sense of hearing from God. So if we think these little sound waves can travel through the air, hit our inner ear, actually the outer ear he sees, it goes in there, it hits the eardrum, bim, bim, bim, bim, bim, and all these things, and we can hear that way, why can't we hear spiritually? That's what they were having.

They positioned themselves to hear from God. They were ministering to the Lord and fasted. If you minister, if you start ministering and reaching out to the homeless, reaching out to all the ministries we have, and you're ministering and you're fasting, watch out, because God's going to speak to you.

Watch out. He will speak to you about things you never even thought of. You'd be ministering and fasting and it's like, go correct that problem.

Go fix that. I want you to sell your house now. What? Where'd that come from? Now if that came to me, I'd say, okay, that's not God right now.

And then you wait, right? You wait on God, and if you keep hearing a sense, and you keep hearing a deep conviction that God's stirring and moving, you'll be able to follow through on that. So I believe that God still speaks to us as they minister to the Lord and fasted and the Holy Spirit said, now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. See, they didn't just go out and do something, they waited, they fasted, they're feeding the widows in their town, they're helping spread the gospel throughout the synagogues, they're fasting, and now the Holy Spirit said, now pull out Paul and Barnabas, and they're going to go and do something I've called them to do.

Now. Now. Who wants to hear now from God? Now.

Now, such and such. Now. I won't say a whole bunch of names because you'll think I'm thinking of you.

So I'll just say now, fill in your name in the blank. God wants to do something. I want to hear that.

Now that Shane, you've been ministering, you've been fasting, you've been praying, now here's what I want you to do. But we don't know the now because we have too much of the world coming in. That's why so many people are confused.

It's the world, it's the world, it's the world, and then we go, I don't know what God wants me to do. I don't know, like the little weebles wobble, but they don't fall down. Right? You feel like that? I don't know what God wants me to do.

A double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. It's very important to listen. Then, verse 3, having fasted and prayed, I guess he wants to get this point across, doesn't he? Having fasted and prayed, laid hands on them, what they did many times is, the laying on of hands was important.

Actually, the Bible, I don't know if I brought it, I have a little thing of oil I sometimes bring from James 5. It says lay hands on them. It's not the oils magical and the laying hands of magical, but when leadership or Christians agree, it's a laying on of hands, it's impartation, not mystical and weird, but it's like a blessing. It's like an agreeing and laying on hands with people and saying, Lord, we pray and we agree with you.

We're commissioning them for their ministry. Verses, well, you stay there, I'll stay here and pray for you. I'll just stay away over here.

It's more of coming and laying hands on and that's what they do sometimes at ordinations. You'll see them lay hands on a family, they'll lay hands on them agreeing with God in this area. So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, verse 4, after they laid hands on them, they sent them away.

So being sent out by the Holy Spirit. Now, when it says sent out by the Holy Spirit, when you know the Holy Spirit is sending you out, when you know God is doing something, you can walk straight come hell or high water, you're going forward. That's a wonderful thing.

That's why many times people quit something or stop something or I don't know, but when you know God is calling me to do this, like I said before, God, you built this church, you built this church, so of course the gates of hell are going to come against it. Of course this is going to happen. Of course, but you called us to do this.

We have no other course to take and we're going forward. But if you go into something not really knowing, right, because you doctored the numbers, you know you can do that, right? People, you know, they mess

with their numbers and the accounting and try to get a house. They'll pull all these little strings, like I don't know if that was really with God.

I shouldn't have did that. And we just don't know sometimes, but when you truly know that the Holy Spirit is sending you out, there's confidence in that. And then they sail to Cyprus and when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues to the Jews.

They also had John as their assistant. So let me just hang my hat here for a minute. How did these disciples, apostles, early believers, how did they know what to do? Do you ever think that? Well, how did they know to go to this city? How did they know to go to this island? How did they know to go here? How did they know? Look, led by the Spirit.

It's almost like there's this road paved for them. Well, I'm going to tell you how to follow God's road map. A lot of this is not new.

We've talked about it before. But for me to avoid these points would be like not mentioning Derek Jeter when you talk about the Yankees late 1990s and early 2000s. Baseball fans, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

If I were to just leave these out, it would seem foolish to talk about a sermon on being led of the Holy Spirit. So here's the key what they did. They waited.

They prayed. They fasted. They meditated on His Word.

And they obeyed. So here's the best way you're going to get direction. First one, let's talk about it.

Waiting. What is waiting? This is so hard to do for most people. Even myself.

When you're waiting, your spirit is quieted. If that's a word. I don't know if it is.

Quickened. Your spirit is quickened. Your soul, there's a quiet sense of God's presence.

And you just wait. That's one of the benefits for next Sunday at 7.30. Come here. It'll be hard to wait the first five or 10 minutes because you'll be going like this.

Got to check Facebook. It's hard for us to wait. So as you're waiting, what happens when you're waiting? I have a deep abiding, a deep abiding sense of direction.

See, here's what happens. Foolish is a good word and selfish and fleshly impulses come into our minds often, don't they? Don't leave me hanging. Come on, guys.

Every one of you get those. It's like, oh, I got the idea. Let's do it.

I got this idea. Let's just do it. I'm just spur of the moment.

Do it, do it. That's not always God. Very often, most of the time, it's not God.

Now, if you have to make a quick decision, here comes a car. I have to move. I'm not talking about that, but big decisions or through the course of life or God directing, it's often through waiting.

I actually have a two-day schedule and on weekdays, I'll still be here, but where I'm going to go to a place, there's no phone and no internet for two days. I'm bringing my Bible, a big piece of notepad and a couple gallons of water. I'm just going to wait on God.

It's very hard the first few hours. Oh, man, I want to grab the car keys and go home. It's like, I can't handle this.

This is what's wrong here because the flesh doesn't like to wait. And that's why I'm asking for direction. I've put together an entire sermon series in one hour doing things like that where God just starts downloading all kinds, as you're looking at Scripture, looking to His Word and asking for direction.

We need so much direction. For example, the Wednesday nights. The youth group is going to grow next fall.

Awanis is growing. We don't have enough room to facilitate this. So do we give up the Wednesday night study and let youth use the sanctuary or do we do this or does God... And people say, we've got to know.

No, we don't. We don't know. The fall is still three months away, four months away and we don't need to know.

We're just going to wait. We're going to wait and see what God wants to do. What about expanding the church somewhere? Are we going to ever plant a church somewhere? I don't know.

God, you know we're going to wait on you. What about this? We've got to do this. Let's just wait on God.

What am I going to preach on? I want to start a marriage series. God, do you want me to start a marriage series? Do you want me to talk about Genesis, do a series on Genesis? Lord, what do I need to stop and wait? Then when I come out of that two days, I'm ready because I feel that God is okay. I'm confident knowing, not perfectly, but that God is directing.

Waiting, I would encourage you to find a place and just wait on God. You might think, well, I don't know what that looks like. Do I just sit at home and whistle? What am I supposed to do here? Well, you know, number one, pray.

Number two is it's big decisions. Wait, drive, put on worship, look to the word of God. Just sit and wait.

Go somewhere. We're always so busy. Think about that.

That's one of the blessings of social media is also it's curse. It's everywhere. It's all consuming.

It's time consuming. Get your mind going with things, especially now. Here comes summer.

Look at everybody taking vacation. I can't take vacation on Facebook. Do you ever see that? They're going here, they're going here, they're going here, they're going here.

I'm just stuck at home. I hate Facebook. I was fine until I went on Facebook.

We get all this information that actually leads us in a wrong direction. Number two, we talk about often, but prayer. That's how they got direction.

Here's why. Prayer is changing and realigning. It's strengthening and confirming.

As I'm waiting and I'm praying, my heart begins to realign with God's heart. Actually, what I was praying for, I'm not really praying for anymore to that degree. I'm like, Lord, whatever your will is.

Because normally what we pray for is comfortable. It's convenient. It's easy.

It usually involves more finances. Right? Could you bring more finances? And this waiting begins to realign my heart and God begins to drop thoughts into my mind and to yours. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

Now, how do you know if it's from the devil or from God? Well, pretty easy at first, right? Does it line up with Scripture? Lord, are you wanting me to do this? I'm waiting here. I'm wanting to hear from you. The man who commits his works to the Lord, his thoughts will be established.

If you believe that Scripture and Proverbs, it's true. Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established. Because the thought process, it's either going with the world or against the world and to the things of God.

Now, let me just talk about this for a second because we did earlier. Fasting, here's what it does basically. It starves the voice of the flesh.

So the flesh stops leading and it starts submitting. The flesh is wanting. Do you ever hear the voice of the flesh? I heard this side.

This side. Do you ever hear from the voice of the flesh? I'll tell you what. The flesh started this morning.

I can't even get out of bed. I look at the clock. It's 4 a.m. She didn't go back to sleep.

That's what it said. For 10 minutes, I fought that flesh. No, no, I'm not going back.

It starts thinking, but Lord, I want to worship you. I want to get to the church early. I want to pray.

I want to put on worship. Flesh, you're coming with me. You're dragging around this weight.

45 minutes. It's not even 5 o'clock. Doesn't some donuts sound good and a big cup of coffee? Oh, it sure does sound good.

My God. But I'm supposed to be fasting today. Well, you can start tomorrow.

Yeah, that's true. I mean, nobody's going to know. Nobody's going to know.

Well, my wife might know because I'll get irritated easy. And the flesh is talking, and the flesh is like, why don't we tell Blessing to cut out a few songs? Cut your sermon down a little bit, and you guys can go to Memorial Day lunch sooner, and you want to stop by. I mean, now Carl's Jr. has that big poster of the McRib sandwich, and it's like, but that's how the flesh is talking to me.

And you know, because you, same thing, right? Get out of church sooner. You don't need to do that. So as you starve the flesh, that voice is silenced.

Now that you're quiet, I can hear the voice of God. And deep calls into deep because the flesh is back here now, not the prevailing voice in my mind. That's what fasting does.

Because whether we like it or not, your cravings, our cravings are directly related to the flesh being fulfilled or being starved. The more we consume, the more we still want to consume it. And it's this consuming, consuming.

And start small. I've known people just, I'm not having breakfast, and it was the hardest thing they've ever done. Or I'm not having lunch, I'm just going to spend time in your Word, and boy, they struggle through it, but then the next time they can get two days, or two days, two meals.

Next time they try for a day, and they just, it's not legalistic and works, it's starving the flesh when it needs to be starved. I think it's very important to help the body get self-disciplined in this area. Because you're either disciplining your body or your body is disciplining you.

You're either bringing your body into submission, or your body is bringing you into submission in the direction it wants to go. So that's the important thing about fasting. The thing we also have to remember is this.

When you fast, you don't just benefit, but others benefit. I can tell you right now, if I didn't fast, the congregation would not benefit to the degree that benefits now with the Word of God. I wouldn't benefit.

Now, take it a step further. What about my family? How it benefits the family? Parents that snap at your children, angry, angry outbursts. Is that the flesh, or is that the Spirit? You starve that flesh, and your family will benefit.

It overflows into everything. Now, sometimes though, often when you fast, the flesh gets even more uglier than it was before the fast. Things come out, I didn't think that was there anymore.

It's something just fighting. You just get angry and moot because it's that flesh being brought into submission. It's never an easy process.

So as they're waiting, as they're praying, as they're fasting, as they're meditating. See, this is a word we often forget because we think of, what do you think of yoga? What are those guys doing? Meditating on the wrong thing, on the wrong gods. But meditating, meditating is biblical.

What you do is you ponder. I mean, sometimes you read through the whole Bible, but I'll stop on a scripture, and I'll just, my goodness. There is no peace, says my God for the wicked.

And that will just captivate me. There is no peace, says my God for the wicked. Lord, what does that mean, no peace for the wicked? And just meditating, or blessed is the man who walketh not in the council of the ungodly.

And you just meditate, Lord, just begin to speak to me in that area. What does that, am I walking in the council of the ungodly somewhere, Lord? What does that look like? God, I'm just meditating, and you're being conformed, your thoughts are being conformed, transformed by the renewing of your mind to God's Word. Now I think like God.

So you see how this is working, right? I'm waiting on God. I'm prayed up, I'm fasting, I'm meditating His Word. Now I think like the heart of God.

Now I can make decisions like the heart of God. But when you've got the world, and I'm full of the world, my belly's full, I have no time for prayer. And every decision, that's why people make hasty, quick

decisions, and they're out of God's will because none of these spiritual disciplines are being applied.

And then the final point that they did was obedience. Now I say this word often, but there's a little twist to this I want you to think about. Ponder this point for a minute about obedience.

To be led by the Spirit is actually obeying the Spirit. Have you ever thought about that? Lord, lead me, guide me, direct me, speak to me. Led by the Spirit is obeying the Spirit.

Just like your kids obey you. Don't do that. Go clean this up.

Go here. And they don't want to, right? That spirit of rebellion. I can't even get my kids to close the slider door so flies don't keep coming in.

But being led of the Spirit is obeying the Spirit. So many people want to be led but not obey. There's your problem.

I could have just summed up this whole... I'm going to remember that for the second service. We're getting out early at the second service and we're jumping right to this point. Obedience.

To be led by the Spirit is obeying the Spirit. Because so many people are fighting the Spirit. I know you want me to do that.

God, I'm not going to. I'm not going to obey. Lord, please lead me.

So that's what being led by the Spirit is. It's obeying the Spirit. Psalm 111.10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. So all those who do His commandments have a good understanding. When I talk about the commandments of God I'm not talking about being a Pharisee.

I'm talking about being a lover of God. I'm not talking about being a hypocrite. I'm talking about being a man or woman filled with the Spirit of God.

I'm not talking about legalism. I'm talking about wisdom. So that's what it looks like, folks.

You want to be led by the Spirit of God you humble yourself. Say, Lord, I want ears to hear. Let me hear whatever you tell me to do.

Whatever you tell me to do God, I will do it. And it's funny. People will pray that but then God will test them.

For example, come up and say, Hey, could you help clean this? Or watch the children? No. God wants me to preach. I actually had a lady a couple years ago at the church.

Where do you need help in? Children's ministry. This age group. God's called me to teach the women.

Oh. Well, guess who won't be teaching the women? Right? I mean... No, I don't do that. Red flag.

You're not being led of God. Humble yourself. Have ears to hear.

Lord, whatever you want me to do means whatever you want me to do. And then as I have ears to hear I'm praying. I'm reading the Word of God.

I'm submitting. I'm meditating. I'm obeying the Word of God.

Now just... So you're not worried that person doesn't go here anymore. In the women's ministry. Probably because that happened.

I'm not sure. But I just see... In my heart it's for people to be led by the Spirit of God. And certain things have to be in place in order for that to happen.

The Holy Spirit will not skip ahead in the book. Have you ever done that? Let's just get to the good stuff. I'll make a confession.

I love reading biographies of all kinds of Christian leaders. But I usually avoid the first couple chapters. I'm not real concerned when you were born or your family life.

I want to go to the power chapter when you became a Christian. Tell me how the Lord led you. And then another one I'm filled with the Spirit of God.

Another one on ministry. Another one how God used him. How they died is kind of interesting.

You know, I want to get to the end of the book. But the Holy Spirit does it. He says, no, back to square one.

Back to square one. That's why when I talk about quenching and grieving the Spirit of God, you need to understand two things. To quench the Spirit of God means you're suppressing a fire.

So these things are not being applied. You are suppressing the fire of God in your life. And what that means is withholding direction.

You won't get direction if that fire is withheld. And grieving the Holy Spirit, it's a sad look without direction. So if the Holy Spirit is quenched and grieved, you have this image of this fire almost out and this sad situation without direction.

The Holy Spirit is sad and there's no direction there for your life. This is very important. J.I. Packard said that God is more likely to direct me through wise teaching than through inner voices.

Now, I believe in the leading of the Holy Spirit. But what he's saying here is many times people are led by inner voices, but they don't line it up with good teaching, with God's Word. You're led first and foremost through the good teaching.

What does God's Word say? And then the voices confirm what the Word of God said. Not the voices, plural, right? But the voice of God, led by the Spirit of God, deep calling unto deep. And I've noticed the closer you get to God, the easier it is to hear His voice.

That's why some people even here, I'm sure, are saying, I can't discern. I don't know that voice. I have a hard time.

Shane, I can't. I'm not there. And it's okay.

Take, be encouraged. It's a very easy process to get back to that, and I'm gonna share it in just a minute. But verse 6 in chapter 13, here's what happened.

They were filled with this Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit sent them out, and then a sorcerer tried to withstand them. A sorcerer, witchcraft, magic, all these things tried to withstand Paul.

And here's Paul. Then Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him, and he said, Oh, man, you are full of deceit and all fraud. See, that's the wrong voice.

Full of deceit, full of error and lying and fraud and manipulation. That's what you are filled with. You son of the devil.

You enemy of all righteousness. You will not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord. And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you.

You shall be blind and not see the sun for a time. And blindness struck the sorcerer, and he was blind. And the procounsel, which is the governor of the land, came to know the Lord through this power of the Holy Spirit.

See, that's what ultimately happens. We're led of the Holy Spirit to have the power of the Holy Spirit. We're not led of the Holy Spirit into this meekness and this kind of vague, not sure what to do cowardliness.

The leading of the Holy Spirit results in boldness so that chains are being broken, lives are being set free, people are being delivered, marriages are being restored. That's what the leading of the Holy Spirit does. It brings reconciliation and renewal and restoration to a land and a church that is so desperate for it.

Are you led of the Holy Spirit? So here's my closing question. What do you do when you hear God's Word? Let's just take this test. Let's just sit down in you this morning as you leave here.

As you hear all this, is there a spirit of rebellion or a spirit of humility? Because as much as I would like to think everybody is going, Oh, that's so wonderful. I need to change. Oh gosh, He hit me in so many different ways.

Praise God. That's not all here. There are some people who are upset because I dared to challenge their comfortable Christianity.

And the only reason I did is because I truly want you to be led of the Holy Spirit. Do you have a gentle, broken, humble, teachable spirit? Or is it a spirit of rebellion? I don't know. You're being convicted right now if it is.

That's how you know. God through the Holy Spirit is convicting you right now that deep repentance needs to take place in this area. Deep repentance.

If you can't listen, you can't apply what God wants you to apply. But here's how to get back on track. Thank God for 2 Chronicles 34, 27.

Let me set the stage for a minute. The Old Testament, I get a headache sometimes. Great king comes into power and then wicked kings follow him.

They're serving God and now they're making carved images and worshiping carved images and burning their babies on the arms of Molech and sacrificing to gods. I'm like, what is wrong with these people? And then somebody comes on the scene, Josiah. He's a good king.

He came across the Bible and read it and said, uh-oh, we're in trouble. Let's get rid of all these carved images. Let's get back on track.

God, God, please. We've been drifting from you. God, would you restore us? And God said to Josiah in 2 Chronicles 34, 27, because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and against its inhabitants and you humbled yourself before him and you tore your clothes and wept before him, he will keep you.

He has heard your prayers. See, that can be for somebody this morning because your heart is tender and you humbled yourself. See, it tells me he wasn't maybe humble or he had the opportunity to not humble himself.

But God says, I heard your prayers. You humbled yourself. You got convicted.

You got maybe irritated, but you humbled yourself. Shoot, this sermon convicted me. But what do we do with that? See, one of the concerns I see a lot of times is many people have, it's like they're filled with excuses.

Buh, buh, buh, buh, buh. Buh, buh, buh, buh, buh. Buh, buh, buh, buh.

Just excuses. Well, why not this? Oh, because of this. Why not because of this? And it's just like we're just filled with excuses.

You can be so wrong and you have all these excuses to block off what God wants to do in your life. So if that is you, humble yourself this morning. Hear his word and God will begin to rebuild and restore your life.

And then obviously, finally, I don't know if some of you are here that you don't know the Lord. Could it be that you're not led by the Spirit because you don't know God? You're not going to be led by the Spirit. You're actually hearing the wrong voice.

You're hearing God convicting, convicting and convicting, but you're listening to the wrong voice. You're listening to the voice of the enemy, the voice of the world, and you're being led astray, and you're going to stay in bondage unless you do what the Bible says. It says confess.

God, I confess that you are Lord. Jesus died for me. I'm confessing my sins.

Jesus died for me. He took my place. God, please save me.

I want to be born again. You don't have to be eloquent and perfect in your prayer. You just have to humble yourself and say, God, I repent.

I'm a sinner. God save me. And he will do that.

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