

**Romans #18**  
**Spiritual Leadership**  
Romans 8:14-17

We have talked a lot about the fact that we are “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” but tonight, I want to focus on verse 14, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

**What is the Spirit of God saying to you tonight?** What is He telling you about your spiritual development, your family, your finances, your place of employment, or even your place of ministry? As a child of God, you ought to know the answer to those questions.

**Perhaps the greatest challenge we face as believers is learning to accurately distinguish the voice of the Holy Spirit.** It is not an easy task, because, by-in-large, we are such carnal thinkers. But it is definitely worthwhile, because if we are to abide in the Lord and to maintain a living connection with Him, we must be able to hear and obey the leading of His Spirit. **God has always expected His people to do that.** When you read the Hebrew covenant, you will see that God told Israel not only to obey His written Word, but also to obey His voice. (See Jeremiah 7:23.) He wanted them to know His will in specific situations.

**When the army of Israel invaded Jericho, they must have heard Gods voice.** Where else would they have acquired the strange battle plan they used? It wasn't written in the Law of Moses. And certainly, no human being would suggest a seven-day march around a city as the most effective form of invasion!

**No, that was Gods plan.** He told it to Joshua, and when Joshua followed it, there was victory. For us to walk in victory today, we must do the same thing Joshua did. **Not only must obey the written Word, we must also be able to hear and obey God's instructions to us about the choices and decisions we face each day.**

**To find out what choice is right in such situations, you must be able to discern the voice or the promptings of the Holy Spirit.** You must be sensitive to His leadings in your heart.

**It did not take me very long in my ministry to realize that I would be lost without the revelation of the Holy Spirit.** God delights in making His truth known to us through the Holy Spirit. I have spent thousands of hours studying the Bible, but nothing is quite as exciting as when the Holy Spirit begins to make known to me the things of the kingdom.

The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 2:12 that we have not been given the spirit of the world, “but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

**How do you cultivate the kind of discernment and sensitivity to stay in turned to the Holy Spirit?** There are several things that I want to share with you that will open the way.

**The first is so obvious, that I am almost ashamed to bring it up, and that is to pray.** 1 Thessalonians 5:17 admonishes us to “Pray without ceasing.” Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in time of need.”

**We have the story in the Old Testament of a king by the name of Ahaz, who lived in the days of the prophet Isaiah.** Ahaz was in serious trouble at the time. He had two enemy armies coming against him and he had no idea what to do about it. So God sent His Word to Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah and gave him a whole new perspective.

**Instead of agreeing with Ahaz about how powerful his enemies were, God let him know they did not really impress Him that much.** In Isaiah 7:4 He referred to them as two “smoking stumps.” Then, in verses 4 and 9, He assured Ahaz that their plans against him would not stand if he would simply obey the following instructions: “Take heed...be quit...fear not...and believe.”

**Now before you start looking around for a prophet like Isaiah to tell you what God is saying to you, let me save you a little time.** You don’t need a prophet to tell you what to do. You have a better covenant than Ahaz had. **You are not just a servant of God like people were in the Old Testament.** Through the blood of Jesus, you have become a full-fledged son, and that is why Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

**The more familiar you are with God's voice, as it comes through the written Word, the more easily you will be able to recognize His voice in your own heart.** Jesus confirmed that fact in John 10:3-4 when He said that His “sheep hear his voice; and he call his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”

**As a child of Almighty God, you have the right and the spiritual ability to hear the voice of God for yourself.** And I can tell you tonight, if you have never heard the voice of God is simply because you have not been listening.

**Remember the Holy Spirit is a gentleman.** I doubt very seriously that God will come in while you are sitting on the couch watching television, slap the remote out of your hand and say, “Shut that thing off! I have something to tell you and I can’t get a word in edgewise.”

**No, He just does not do that.** I have found that you have to give Him the opportunity to speak to you. **How can you do that? When you are in your car for instance, instead of listening to John Boy and Billy, why not put in a sermon CD and listen to the Word of God?** When you are getting dressed in the morning, why not listen to a CD filled with praise music? **Instead of spending all of your nights watching television, why not set aside some time to read a chapter in the Bible?**

**In other words, we need to put ourselves in a position to hear what God has to say to us.** And sometimes that just simply requires us to stop and listen.

**Second, we need to focus on God’s written Word, the Bible.** I am absolutely appalled at the amount of believers that never pick up their Bibles except to bring them to church. **As I said earlier, it is through the written Word that we become more sensitive to hearing what the Holy Spirit has to say to us about the choices and decision that we face each day.**

**Say, for example, you are offered a job in another city.** Naturally speaking, it may seem to be a great opportunity. **It might involve an increase in pay or a promotion.** **But to be sure what to do, you need guidance from the Lord.**

**You can open the Bible and receive some general instructions that may help you.** But the written Word of God will not tell you whether to take that job or not. **You won’t find a chapter and verse that says, "Yes, that’s a good move. Go to Chicago next May and take the job there. That’s God’s will for you."**

**It is through the written Word of God that we learn to tell the difference between our flesh and our spirit.** Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the Word is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

**Scripturally speaking, your soul is the seat of your emotions and your spirit is that which allows you to be in fellowship with holy God.** Therefore, discerning the difference between the voice of your emotions and the voice of God can sometimes be very challenging. **Why? Because we are emotional beings.** And because of that we often act more on emotion than we do on the voice of God.

**Through the written Word, your mind becomes renewed to accept God's way as the right thing to do.** Why? Because God always agrees with His written Word and His written Word always agrees with Him. **In fact, Psalm 138:2 says He has magnified His Word even above His name.** That means God has put His Name on His written Word the way we would put our name at the bottom of a contract. He has given us His Word as a covenant and signed it in the Name of Jesus by the blood of Jesus.

**Since God cannot lie, there is no way He will ever do or say anything contrary to that Word.** He has absolutely joined Himself to it forever. So the first place God takes us to train us to recognize His voice in to His written Word. He uses it to tune our spiritual ears to the real so that we can easily recognize a counterfeit.

**Another major key to developing and maintaining spiritual sensitivity is to stay connected to the realm of the spirit throughout the day.** Don't just get up in the morning and say a short prayer and then live your life the rest of the day as if God has nothing us to do with you. My advice is simple - **think of God often throughout the day and give Him praise.**

**Throughout the day, keep yourself available to God.** Whether you are a business person sitting at a desk or a home-maker buying groceries and cleaning the house, whatever your job is, maintain an awareness and a living connection with God so that at any moment, He can reach you if He needs to let you know something.

**I am convinced that it is possible to keep your mind so stayed on God that no matter what you come up against, you are just a prayer away from hearing from the Holy Spirit.** If you will maintain your union with God throughout the day by making Him the number one priority and continually walking in love, you can stay connected to heaven twenty-four hours a day. You can rest in the assurance that you have all of heaven's resources backing you and that the Holy Spirit is constantly with you, ready to talk to you about anything you need to know.

**But you must understand, the Holy Spirit will not force Himself on you.** If you want Him to be active in your life, you must give Him place. You must be constantly looking to Him for guidance, instead of managing your life according to your own natural plans and ideas.

Surely that is what James had in mind when he said this is James 4:8, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

**The next thing is also a very simple thought and that is to be available.** I am convinced that God has a great ministry for each of us to fulfill, the problem is that we refuse to make ourselves available to do, and/or to go where He is calling us to go. **The problem with most of us is that we have our minds already made up about what God needs to call us to do and certainly where God has called us to go.** With each passing day I am more convinced that God is not looking for ability nearly as much as He is looking availability.

**I promise you that if you will continue to be available to fulfill God's will for your life, regardless of what and where He might lead, you will be amazed at what God can do for you and through you.** He will enable you to do greater things than you have ever imagined. He will enable you to live like an overcomer and be a blessing to many, many people.

**In order to be available you must replace fear with faith and self with selflessness.** I am convinced that fear and selfishness has destroyed more ministries than anything else on the face of this earth.

**FEAR causes you to doubt whether or not God can and will meet your needs if you are obedient to His call for your life.** **SELFISHNESS** causes you to be more concerned about what you want, what your wife and children want, more than what God wants for your life. **And the sad truth is that many of God's precious children will never know the joy of reaching their potential in the kingdom of God because of fear and selfishness.**

**Tonight I challenge you to put your faith into action.** Open the ears of your heart and start listening to the voice of the Spirit, especially when you are reading the Word. **Pay attention not just to the activity in your brain but to the quickenings in your spirit man.**

**I promise you, the more you trust His voice and follow His leadings, the more clearly you will find you can hear from Him.** Before long, hearing from God will not be just an occasional even but an everyday part of your life. **And when someone asks you, "What is the Spirit of God telling you tonight?" you won't hesitate a moment.** You will know exactly what to say.