

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Errors Of “Spirit Led” Claimants

By Larry Ray Hafley

First, no one denies that we are led of the Spirit. Indeed, all Christians are so led (Gal. 5:16-26). However, this leading is through the word revealed by the Spirit in the Bible (1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Tim. 4:1; Cf. Heb. 3:7; 4:7; Rev. 1:19; 2:1 – *“write....hear what Spirit saith”* – Rev. 2:7). When we read the Bible, we hear the Spirit. When we are obedient to what we read, we are led by him, that is, by the Spirit.

Second, The Holy Spirit witnesses to us through the Scriptures; the Hebrew writer said so (Heb. 10:15-17).

Third, not everyone who claims to be led by the Spirit is actually led by him (1 Jn. 4:1). If every claimant were led by the Spirit, why would the Spirit tell us not to believe every spirit? Why would the Spirit commend those who tested the spirits and found some to be *“liars”* if all are led by him (Rev. 2:2)?

Common Errors of Spirit Led Claimants

(1) Some, though not all, claim they “cannot resist the Spirit’s leading.” When they cause difficulty or stir family trouble, they say their problems are caused by the Spirit’s leading in ways they do not understand, and that they are unable to ignore that leading. Paul received a *“heavenly vision”* (Acts 26:19). However, he said, *“I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.”* But, he could have been! He could have chosen not to do the bidding of God. Too, *“the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”* (1 Cor. 14:32). Thus, one can control himself (and is expected to do so) while under the influence of the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:27, 28, 32, 33, 40).

(2) They claim God is leading them to do his work in ways they never imagined! If that be so, 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, cannot be true. In that text, the Holy Spirit said the Scriptures completely equip the man of God *“unto every good work.”* Did the Spirit tell the truth? Or, are claimants of direct Spirit guidance telling the truth? One of them is lying. *“Let God be true, but every man a liar,”* especially if that man contradicts the witness of the Spirit in the Bible!

(3) They cease to work and worship as the Spirit-led disciples of the New Testament did. We know first century Christians were led by the Spirit to *“sing,”* break bread *“upon the first day of the week,”* and to oppose all human traditions (Acts 2:42; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 4:6, 17; 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Tim. 1:3; 4:16; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 1:13). The *“Spirit of truth”* does not lead men to worship in ways he severely condemned in his revealed word (Col. 2:8, 18-23; 2 Jn. 9; Rev. 22:18, 19).

(4) Charismatic Catholic claimants “feel led by the Spirit” to sprinkle water on infants. Certain Protestant claimants “don’t feel it is right” for them to do so. Does the Spirit tell one group one thing and another something else? Which *“Spirit”* shall we believe? What of the babies of the Protestant claimants who die without *“baptism”*? If both are “OK,” then it appears that God indeed is *“the author of confusion”* (1 Cor. 14:33)! Does the Spirit’s word in the Bible on this, and other topics, not matter at all (Jn. 12:48)?

(5) They claim a special joy others cannot know or appreciate. The apostles never claimed such an exclusive privilege. John said, *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth”* (3 Jn. 4). Is it possible for every Christian to have such joy as John had? Yes! Since John, too, could have *“no greater joy,”* then those who say they have a joy above that of others are in error on that point.

What the apostles had, others could share, if they were but obedient to the gospel (Phil. 4:9; 1 Jn. 1:3, 4; 2:3-5). If God gives them a select, restricted bliss, he is a respecter of persons, for he gives them something he does not give to other obedient children (Acts 10:34, 35).

(6) They say their leading by the Spirit tells them not to discuss the Scriptures with those who disagree with them. If so, this reverses the order given those led by the Spirit in the New Testament (1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3). It condemns the practice of the apostles (Acts 17:2, 3, 16, 17). The apostle Paul allowed and encouraged others to search the Scriptures to see whether or not he was teaching the truth (Acts 17:11, 12).

However, if the Spirit now forbids such discussions, what shall Bible students do with Proverbs 28:4 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, which urge us to “*earnestly contend*” with those with whom we disagree? Ironically, and inconsistently, those who say it is wrong to “argue” often will argue at great length that it is wrong to argue! Will one who claims to be led by the Spirit today dare to challenge the charges made in this essay? If not, by what Spirit is he being led (2 Tim. 4:2-4; Titus 2:1, 15; 1 Jn. 4:1; Jude 3; Rev. 2:2-5, 12-16)? ■



Attendance

By Roy E. Cogdill

Attendance at the services of the church is the best index of interest in one’s own spiritual growth, and is a certain indication of one’s own interest in the Lord’s church.

One of the purposes for which God gave the church is that we might be edified as a member of the body (Eph. 4:16). The edification of the body as a whole depends upon each member contributing his individual part thereto. This is the object of worship and fellowship in the church. We need this strength for life's problems and temptations, and we cannot successfully live the Christian life and render an acceptable service to God without it. Every one of us should be determined, therefore, to obtain it by attending every service that it is possible for us to attend. The services of the church are designed for this very purpose. They can be a blessing for our souls and make us stronger Christians. We must attend them, however, with the right attitude if we are to receive a blessing from them. No service can do us any good without our being present, no matter how much truth is preached. Every service will benefit us unless we come to it with an improper attitude unteachable, and prejudiced in heart. We rob ourselves of the strength we need if we fail to attend with the right disposition of soul.

In these services, through study and instruction, and the worship ordained of God, we receive admonition and exhortation, and therefore strength. No member of the church can be the strong Christian that he should be without attending every service possible. It is entirely impossible for us to be Christians that we must be in order to please God, and grow as we should, if we habitually miss the services held for the very purpose of helping us. Neither is it possible for us to please God, and grow as we should, be merely attending on Sunday morning. Sunday morning Christianity is half-hearted Christianity, and the person who has it needs a whole-hearted conversion to the Lord.

When our services on Sunday evening present only about 60% of our attendance on Sunday morning; when, on Wednesday night, we have only about half of those present for the breaking of bread on Sunday morning; when attendance at the Bible classes is less than the membership of the congregation; and when more than half of the membership of a congregation do not attend and support a series of gospel meetings to preach the gospel; something is seriously wrong with the church. Such half-hearted devotion to duty and the interests of the kingdom can only be a reproach to the church, and be disappointing to the Lord. Where do you, as an individual, fit into the picture?

If you have been attending only a part of the services, won’t you become a full-time Christian? ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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