

LED BY THE SPIRIT

One is not a Christian unless he is led by the Spirit: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). How does God lead His children through the Holy Spirit? Many professed believers have come under the delusion that there is some sort of **direct** guidance of the Spirit in their lives. Some feel that this is done when one gives free reign to his impulses or yields to his hunches. Others believe they hear a voice speaking directly to them. Still others believe the Spirit leads them by showing them special signs which indicate what decision needs to be made at a given time. Some wait on the Spirit to “lead” them to get up in the morning, which socks to wear, and even which one to put on first. Does the Spirit provide **direct** leadership in the life of the Christian? Does He tell us where to go, what to do, when to do what, and such like? Please bear in mind that, however the Spirit leads, He leads not a few or many, but all, according to Romans 8:14.

In the first century, miraculous power was given to the apostles, and they were able to impart it to others for the purpose of revealing and confirming the Gospel (Heb. 2:3–4). However, it is never said or even implied that every Christian possessed miraculous gifts. On some occasions, the Spirit told someone to go to a certain place and do a certain thing (e.g., Acts 8:29; 10:19–20; et al.) On some occasions some were directly (apparently) forbidden to do a certain thing (Acts 16:6–7). However, it is readily observable that such direct messages, even in the days of miracles, were not the ordinary, but the extraordinary occurrence. Since these miraculous incidents of the Spirit’s leadership were exceptional and confined to only some or a few individuals, it is manifest that such miraculous leadership was not in mind when Paul wrote Romans

8:14. The kind of leadership of which he wrote is **that which the Spirit gives to every Christian**, and the implication is that it is not occasional, but constant.

How then are sons of God led by the Spirit? One is led by the Spirit when he obeys the Word of the Spirit: “Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). To “walk by the Spirit” is to be “led by the Spirit.” Immediately after the passage above, the Spirit, through Paul, led us to understand what the “works of the flesh” are and what the “fruit of the Spirit” is (Gal. 5:19–26). There is only one way in which all of God’s children are “led by the Spirit”: it is by obeying the Word of the Spirit. Any other claimed leading of the Spirit insults and denies His written Word by which He leads us! Only as we obey the Word does the Spirit lead us.

—Dub McClish

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