

Being Sensitive to the Holy Spirit

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Scripture References: Mt. 4:4, 5:8: Lk. 4:4; Jude 20

The Lord awakened me during the night to pray for a minister in India who was under spiritual attack. We are vessels of the Lord and His Spirit and He wants to use us to help others and expand the Kingdom if we are sensitive to His leading and Presence.

He wants me to teach you how to be more sensitive to Him in this article. When we began this website 3 years ago we wrote one teaching article a month similar to the format we had on the CCI Report which was originally printed and mailed when we began it in 1991 and then we switched to an electronic format in 1997 that we emailed to people. Now we try to write a new teaching article each week on the website; however, if we don't have something from the Holy Spirit then we don't write anything.

The same thing is true of preaching. I normally receive the message to preach at least a day before or sometimes months before if it's a conference at another church.

Although I've never had this happen, I can tell you that if the Lord didn't give me a message then it would be clear to me that He didn't want me to preach that day. Sometimes He doesn't want preaching but rather a complete emphasis on prayer, worship or personal ministry. We've had this happen a number of times. We've actually had people stop attending the church in Montana simply because the service was 4 hours long or there was no preaching. But we must come to the place as Christians and ministers to understand that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the

Church and His Spirit is in charge of each service (if we allow Him to be) and so we must follow Him and not do things just to make the services more comfortable for people.

There is too much emphasis on this sort of thing now which is why we don't see the manifestation of the Spirit in many churches today. Just this morning there was an article in the local paper here regarding a Presbyterian church in Los Angeles that allows people to bring dogs to church as "members of the family." They also provide grief counseling to families when they lose a pet. They are not the only church doing this type thing. What is commonly called Christianity today is full of this type stuff – there is no spiritual sensitivity to the Spirit so ministers are using the ways of the world to try and attract people to their churches. There is a great emphasis on making people feel *comfortable* in the services. Well, I have to tell them the truth, that is not New Testament.

When the Holy Spirit came to found the original Church on the Day of Pentecost His emphasis was not on making people feel comfortable. I doubt that anyone felt comfortable when they saw Ananias and Sapphira drop dead for lying to the Holy Spirit. Churches that "make people feel comfortable" must be careful that they aren't unwittingly allies to Satan because generally these type churches never deal with sin; therefore, members of the congregation tend to never become truly born again.

Evelyn has talked about a situation where the Lord dealt with her about this. Years ago before she went into full-time ministry she worked as a marketing manager for a large cable company. In her office she had a sticker that said I Love JC. One day a company official came into her office and asked her what the sticker meant. In those days she was very timid and shy. She hem-hawed around and did not tell him that it meant she loved Jesus Christ. Later after he left the Lord asked Evelyn why she did not tell the man what the sticker indicated. Her response to the Lord was "I didn't want to offend him." The Lord immediately said to her, "Don't you think he will be offended when he is in hell because you did not preach the gospel to him?"

Our emphasis if we want to change the world is to be instruments of the Holy Spirit and learn to follow Him. The main thing I tell young ministers who want a stronger anointing on their lives is "learn to follow the Holy Spirit because He never makes any mistakes." So if we can be sensitive to Him and His leading we will be winners in the eyes of God and He will be able to use us to shake a sleeping, dying, crying world on the way to hell.

The Lord has many ways to speak to us; I've written about finding at least 23 ways from the Scriptures that He has spoken to people in the past. However, we don't choose which way for Him to speak – He does! But we need to be aware of the many

ways in which He speaks to us or we can miss Him and often miss a blessing for ourselves and others the Lord may want to use us to minister to.

The number one way the Lord speaks to us is through the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. The more mature you are spiritually and the more pure your human spirit is the clearer this leading will be. Often Christians have problems hearing from the Lord because their spirits have been rendered *insensitive* to the Spirit because of a number of factors we will discuss in this article.

- **Purity of Heart** – I wrote last week that one of the problems most Christians have is that their hearts aren't pure – they're tainted in some respect and to some degree. Often demons blind us to our true condition so we must be active in seeking the Lord to help us become pure. The main spiritual tools we can use are prayer – which has a cleansing effect, especially praying in the Spirit – and meditation in the Word of God so that we are better able to make the right decisions based on “what would Jesus do.” Whenever you make a choice that you know is wrong or contrary to the Word then you have an issue of purity of heart. Remember, it's up to you to do something about it. Like the Apostle Paul who said, “I keep my body under,” we have the responsibility to purify our hearts. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” If you're not seeing God then I'd recommend you take a look at the condition of your heart.

Incidentally, this is another primary reason why we don't see much power in both preaching and ministry from the pulpit vis á vis the early church because purity always precedes power in the realm of the Holy Spirit.

- **The Cares of the World** – last week we took a look at this in the parable Jesus spoke saying that these cares “choke the word” in people and make it unfruitful. The same can be said about sensitivity to the Spirit. The more we focus on the cares and problems of our physical lives the more we become desensitized to the Holy Spirit. In fact, this is one of the main reasons why the devil continually attacks us in this area – he wants to take our focus off God and onto physical problems which he also uses to attack us in the soulful realm of our emotions.

- **Spiritual Maturity** – spiritual things are much like physical things. Just as our physical maturity depends on what we feed our bodies and minds so does our spiritual maturity (Mt. 4:4, Lk. 4:4). A spiritually mature person is better able to recognize spiritual things than a baby. And because we each have 24 hours in a day how we spend our time influences our spiritual maturity. If we choose to spend all our time on T.V. or entertainment instead of spiritual pursuits then we may never mature spiritually. Another thing that greatly affects spiritual maturity is who we have as a spiritual father or minister. The more mature they are, the purer their hearts are, the better they know the Holy Spirit, the stronger their anointing, etc., the quicker we will mature sitting under their ministry.
- **Spiritual Experience** – although this is similar to maturity in some ways it is also different in that a person can be spiritually mature and yet if they don't have much experience in say, deliverance, then they would not be as effective as the same person with 15-20 years of experience. Again, this is similar to the physical in that all other things being equal you're safer in the hands of a doctor who's performed the heart procedure 700 times than one attempting his first such operation.
- **Praying in the Spirit** – I've found this to be one of the main keys to improving your sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. In 1980 the Spirit said to me: "Spend much time praying in the Spirit and as you pray in the Spirit you will walk in the Spirit and spiritual things will become more real to you." Praying in the Spirit not only builds up and charges your spirit (*cf.* Jude 20) but it makes one more sensitive to the Presence of the Holy Spirit and knowing the "Mind of Christ."

Prayer is an interesting subject that I devote a very long chapter to in *Mysterious Secrets of the Dark Kingdom*. I certainly don't claim to be an expert on prayer; however, I've learned that when I pray in the Spirit for others I always receive revelation about them – every time. That's because I am sensitive to the Spirit's desire in the life of the person I'm praying for. My wife is used differently in prayer by the Lord and often as an intercessor. Many years ago she was actually called on the carpet by her senior pastor and chastised for spending too much time in prayer at the Christian School there at the church because, the pastor said, "It makes the other ministers look bad." How amazing!

In her case she will *know* in advance before praying what the will of the Lord is and what's on His Mind and she will pray it in. She has an amazing gift in this area and the Lord gave me a revelation about it in 1999 and I composed a poem about her titled, "My Crucible." She is a crucible of the Lord that He uses to bring His purposes and plans into the earth. I mention this example not to glorify my wife but to emphasize how important it is for you to understand *how* the Spirit wants to use you in prayer so that you can be sensitive to Him when He moves upon you. Often the Spirit will come upon us in what we term a *burden* for somebody or a certain situation. When He does this it's a good idea to pray in the Spirit immediately and not stop until the burden lifts.

But I encourage you to spend more time praying in the Spirit if you want to increase your spiritual sensitivity to God the Spirit and know what's on His Mind. Every Christian should spend a minimum of 1-2 hours a day praying in the Spirit. This may seem like a lot of time if you are not in a habit of doing this but if you train yourself to pray in the spirit whenever you are alone in the car, in the shower, etc. as well as your dedicated prayer time before long you will find that you are praying 4, 5, 6 hours a day with no problem.

Today is Valentine's Day; don't forget to take a few minutes today to compose a Valentine of thanks and love to the One who loves you the most, the Lord Jesus.