

The Holy Spirit

How to Recognize the Spirit's Voice
Acts 1:15-26

Grace Bible Church
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Introduction: How do you know if a _____ an idea, a _____, a dream or a nudge is the Holy Spirit or something or someone else is talking to you.

A brief glimpse at the book of Acts shows the Holy Spirit _____ but the details are more sketchy than we wish.

- “And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”” (Acts 8:29–30)
- “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”” (Acts 13:2)
- “For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements:” (Acts 15:28)
- “And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” (Acts 16:6–10)

Can we _____ the Holy Spirit to lead us in such ways today? “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14) However, to say it is easy is a lie. Because our hearts can be dark and evil.

Should we expect the Holy Spirit to guide us in the details of our entire lives 24/7? _____
“This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.” (Romans 15:22–24)

Key thought: The Holy Spirit _____ in Scripture and He primarily _____ to speak thru Scripture today. I say primarily because I don't believe God has closed off other avenues completely, but Jesus and Scripture is his final revelation and therefore authoritative. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.” (Hebrews 1:1–2)

- I. The Holy Spirit spoke Scripture through _____ (1:16) Holy Spirit spoke through David. Therefore the Scriptures bear both the marks of divine and human authorship. (2 Peter 1:20–21)
 - A. The OT as God's word is testified to by Jesus himself. (Matthew 5:17–18)
 - B. The NT as God's word is testified to by the Apostles. “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.” (1 Thessalonians 2:13, ESV) “And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.” (2 Peter 3:15–16)

- II. The Holy Spirit speaks through Scripture _____.
- Acts 1 is an example of applying Scripture. They chose a replacement for Judas based on the text of Scripture.
 - Acts 4 is an example of using Scripture as a way to honor God in prayer and lay a foundation for a request. "And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, " "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' —" (Acts 4:24–26)
 - The Scriptures are timely (had meaning for those who heard them the first time) and timeless (meaning for us today). "Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did." (1 Corinthians 10:6)
 - A reminder that cannot be emphasized too highly- Scripture is infallible, our interpretations and applications are not. Not wrong to question whether or not they should have replaced Judas. Don't question that the Holy Spirit spoke through David.
- III. Some _____ to ask about those prompts:
- Will this make me more _____? The Holy Spirit's primary ministry is to magnify and glorify Jesus. He simply will not lead you to dishonor Christ in any way. He gives us the power to say no to sin and yes to Christ. He will lead us to put off sin and put on Christ.
 - Will this give me an opportunity to _____ someone else. The HS gives us the power to serve. So if you are prompted to serve another person or organization to help other it could very well be the HS is speaking.
 - Will this lead me to an opportunity to _____? When you go to the book of Acts much of the Holy Spirit's leading is about witnessing. Even Paul's decision to go to Jerusalem while leading to his arrest and imprisonment (as prophesied) led to him being able to witness to Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa as well to his companions on the journey to Jerusalem.
 - Will this lead me to sacrifice and _____. A close reading of the NT reveals that many if not most of God's commands are not about what we should do, but what kind of people God wants us to be. God is forming our character. One of the ways to distinguish between the Spirit's leading and our own selfish desires is to ask if I am willing to sacrifice and surrender to see it through.
 - Is this _____? Will the Holy Spirit lead you to quit your job without another source of income? Maybe. Are you willing to struggle financially while you pursue God will?

Conclusion: To hear the Spirit's voice we need to read and reflect on Scripture for a lifetime. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (Colossians 3:16)

Do not read the Scriptures like a lottery?

"And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself." (Matthew 27:5)

"He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise." (Luke 10:37)

"Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." (John 13:27)