

3.4 How does He lead us?

Since we know that we need His leadership and that He wants to provide leadership, the most important question becomes, how does He lead us?

First of all, God can communicate to whomever He wants, whenever He wants, in any way He wants. He doesn't need to follow my pattern or any other pattern. That being said, I have found there are a few general principles He seems to normally follow.

- He will not lead us to do anything contrary to the clear teaching of His Word. If He said it then, He still means it.
- He will not lead us to do anything contrary to His nature.
- He will lead those who...
 - want to do His will (John 7:17¹)
 - are humble (Psalm 25:9²)
 - fear Him (Psalm 25:12, 14³)
 - trust Him (Proverbs 3:5-6⁴)
 - serve Him and want to hear Him (1 Samuel 3:10⁵)
 - seek Him (Matthew 7:7⁶)
 - have a pure heart (Matthew 5:8⁷)
- He will often times lead us with confirmation, repeating the message through various means. (2 Corinthians 13:1⁸)

These are true and accurate principles that are helpful to know and follow, but they may not help much in the moment when you are facilitating prayer. So you may be asking, "How is He going to lead me?" Actually, I can't tell you how He will lead you, but I can tell you how He has led other people, and how He has led me in specific settings of prayer. Here are a few ways.

A *highlight* from a song or Scripture – when I hear Scripture read or a song sung, I simply try to *listen* to the words. It is interesting how over-familiarity will hinder our ability to hear something fresh. Many times, as I am listening, the Lord seems to highlight a word or phrase. It is like those words are bigger or heavier, or like an accented syllable in a word. I notice them more. When this happens, I try to listen more carefully. Most of the time this is God getting my attention. Often times I will simply ask the Lord at that moment how He wants us to pray from this truth. Once I ask that question the answer often seems to be quite clear.

A very *crisp thought* that fits the situation – I have many thoughts going through my mind during a time

¹ John 7:17 If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

² Psalm 25:9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

³ Psalm 25:12 Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him. 14 Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.

⁴ Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

⁵ 1 Samuel 3:10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

⁶ Matthew 7:7 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

⁷ Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁸ 2 Corinthians 13:1 This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

of prayer. But every now and then there is a very clear, crisp thought that is, frankly, a better thought for that situation than I am used to thinking. A pastor friend of mine says. “It sounds like me, but it is not what I would think.” When this happens, I try to pay more close attention.

A *picture* of what may happen – As someone is praying, I may see, in my mind’s eye, a certain person moving over to stand next to them to pray with them. So, at the right time, I will ask that person to do what I saw happen. Or as I have heard someone reading a section of Scripture, I may have a picture of the group responding in a certain way. For example, to read the section phrase by phrase and let us repeat the words after them. So, when the person completes the passage – or even as they begin to read the passage – I have asked them to begin again and allow us to do what I saw.

A *distant sense* or thought that grows – Sometimes there is a very small thought that continues to expand and come closer to the front of my mind. It is like the cloud Elijah’s servant saw coming toward Mt. Carmel. As it gets closer, I begin to recognize that the Holy Spirit might want to use that thought in some way.

A *reoccurring thought* that eventually fits the situation – Similar to the *distant* thought mentioned above, sometimes there is a thought that reoccurs several times during a time of prayer. At first I might not think it is very significant, but after it comes back a few times, I begin to think it may be more than just my thought.

Confirmation *through others* – There may be a normal thought I have and just as I am thinking about it, someone else prays a very similar thought. Or someone may read a verse that reflects the same idea. Or someone may sing a song on the same topic. I have been in several settings when someone began to read a Scripture that was the very verse(s) I had my eyes on in my Bible. And there have been times when two people have begun to sing exactly the same song in exactly the same key at exactly the same time. This is another indication that it is more than coincidence.

When someone reads or prays there that comes with it – Another way I Spirit is when someone prays or reads almost a prophetic sense to it. It seems the sense of more decibels) or more when this happens, the Holy Spirit what has been said or read. I want to time when this happens, the one to make anything happen. They may be completely unaware of the weight of what they are saying. The difference is not so much in the saying as in the hearing.

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is an *extra clarity and conviction* have sensed the leading of the Holy a verse it is just *different*. There is weightier or louder (though not in clear or anointed. Often times wants us to pay more attention to emphasize here that most of the speaking is not necessarily trying

Receiving His leadership should not be seen as either mechanical or magical. On one hand, we should not rely on any specific steps or formula. God doesn’t fit well into formulas. On the other hand, we should not think of hearing the Lord as some kind of magical activity. He uses His word, our minds, those around us, and many other sources to draw our attention to His messages to us.

Just as when I call my wife on the phone, I don’t say, “Marilyn, hello, this is Dennis calling,” so also may we each get to a point where we will be able to hear and recognize the direction of the Holy Spirit as we lead others in prayer.

- **Blessed by Doing** – Which of the seven ways mentioned above has the Holy Spirit led you? Tell Him you want to be open to any and all ways He may lead you as you facilitate prayer and ask Him to make you very sensitive to His leading.