

Led By the Spirit

Written By the Late Ronald L. Dart

How does the Holy Spirit speak to us?

In Acts 16 we read, “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, *assuredly gathering* that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them” (Acts 16:4-10).

How did they know? When it comes to the Macedonian call, we are told in no uncertain terms—it was a vision and it is described—but not a word of description about the “*how*” of the movement of the Holy Spirit. Only this—it was after the Macedonian call that they put it all together—assuredly gathering all the facts together. The forbidding of the Holy Spirit and its non-permission were probably circumstantial. It was only when the whole picture came into focus that they realized it was the Spirit all along.

I doubt there is a one of us that does not desire and yearn for the leadership of the Spirit in our lives. What if I told you that leadership is there, but you aren’t paying attention? The Holy Spirit does not get in our face. It does not thunder at us.

Every one of you knows this Scripture, but I am not so sure we have a good grasp on the *Why*. “And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been

very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount

before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering of the cave. And, behold,

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Rich Toward God. . .

Often before graduating from school, we’re out looking for a job. Our goal is to make money—hopefully to get rich at some point. Too often our riches are put in a bag with holes and it’s all gone before we know it. Inflation sets in and eats up our precious money. The stock market crashes and there goes our savings. Being rich towards God is an investment in eternity. What better investment can you make? God won’t let you down. You’ll get your dividends. He rewards the faithful.

Why False Prophets Succeed

By the Late Ronald L. Dart

I heard a story of a small church group that was splintered by disagreement over doctrine. I'm not suggesting by the title of this piece that the people concerned are false prophets, or even that they are necessarily wrong. But when the results are the fragmentation of a church, something is wrong somewhere. Why do people allow themselves to be polarized and their church to be fractured over issues that are either minor or that people of good will should easily resolve?

That such things will happen is a given. Jesus himself said that false prophets would show signs and wonders with an aim to the seduction of those who would listen to them (Mark 13:22). Peter was quite specific on the subject, saying, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1).

There is no getting around the certainty of these warnings. The false teachers are said to be "among you;" that is to say they will be a part of the church. So we would do well to pay close attention both to the warnings and the manifestation of the truth of those warnings as they play out among us.

What motivates false prophets? Paul, in his farewell to the Ephesian elders, sees it in very simple terms: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, *to draw away disciples after them*" (Acts 20:29-30).

The objective of false prophets and teachers of whatever stripe is, and always has been, power. Money may be a factor, but money is just another kind of power. In the end, the goal is the influence and control of the minds of men. Even when a would-be leader is motivated by self aggrandizement, there is no success for him without the response of other people. This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians, "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they

would exclude you, that ye might affect them" (Galatians 4:17).

It is an odd way to put it, but it is clear enough. They want to cut you out of the herd (exclude you) so that you can admire and esteem (affect) them.

If the motives of the false prophet are simple, the motives of those who listen to them are more complex. Why would anyone allow himself to be used this way? The answer is deeply rooted in the wants and needs of the people who listen. The truth is that a

Jesus himself said that false prophets would show signs and wonders with an aim to the seduction of those who would listen to them (Mark 13:22).

false prophet cannot succeed unless he touches a chord in the hearts of a set of people. As God said through Jeremiah, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priest bear rule by their means; *and my people love to have it so*" (Jeremiah 5:30-31). False prophets and false teachers

succeed because they offer people something they want.

Those who desire a following have little difficulty in finding an issue, and the issue itself is of little importance. The people who decide to follow on the issue may do so for a variety of reasons. The only thing they have in common is that they want to do something or quit doing something, and the issue gives them the excuse they need. Sometimes the issue is simply boredom. If you are tired of your church, why not split from it?

I can't escape the words of Jeremiah who said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). If there is a way to deceive ourselves we will find it. If God's way makes us uncomfortable, there will always be an excuse ready at hand to get away from it. If we have trouble finding a reason, sooner or later, a false prophet will come along and provide one. The only thing you can be sure of is that the apparent reason (say, a new doctrine) will have little or nothing to do with the real reason.

Why does God allow false prophets to deceive people? It would be easy for him to stop it. There may

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be a clue in a statement by Paul: “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Corinthians 11:19). Inevitably, there are people who follow the teachings of Christ for the wrong reasons. They say all the right things, but their hearts are not right. Paul seems to be saying that allowing heresies is part of God’s plan to separate the sheep from the goats.

Years ago a study was done in Canada to determine if the wolf population was the cause of a decline in the herds of caribou. Studies showed that wolves lived most of the year on rodents and small animals. They only killed caribou during the big migrations, and then they tended to kill the weakest and sickest of the caribou herds. The truth turned out to be that the wolves served, not to weaken the herds of caribou, but to strengthen them by culling out the weakest and sickliest of the herds.

I have said all that to say this: Jesus made it plain that there would be many, not few, false prophets in the world. He said we would know them, not by their arguments, but by their fruits. When a theological argument is driving a wedge between brothers, there is reason to question the motives of those involved. But the motives that need the most careful examination are

not those of the false teacher. We already know what he wants. The motives you need to question are your own. What is it that you really want? What are the real issues that concern you? Are you being honest with yourself, your brethren, or with God? It is not fair to let your brethren believe that you are dissatisfied with, say, the church calendar, when the real problem lies elsewhere.

When David found himself at odds with God, there was one thing he never forgot—honesty. In his most heartfelt prayer, he told God, “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom” (Psalm 51:6).

If you ever find yourself in one of these doctrinal crossfires, or if you are being tempted irrationally to leave the faith, try this prayer: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24). If you ask this in sincerity, you can count on an answer. God will help you see yourself and will give you the strength to do something about it.

People who are conned by a false prophet have no one but themselves to blame. The wolves cull out the weakest of the herd, not the winners. And one of the prime traits of a winner is honesty.

Old Fashioned Summer Camp 2016

June 6-10

By Linda Benton

Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) and Church of God International (CGI) are co-sponsoring a good “old fashioned” summer camp for our children because:

- Camp builds relationships
- Camp helps cultivate social skills
- Camp builds teamwork
- Camp builds character
- Camp helps conquer fears
- Camp builds memories
- Camp expands every child’s abilities
- And this camp will provide daily Bible instruction
- Camp is fun!

If you are interested in your kid coming to camp, the cost is \$180 per child. No add-on charges. This \$180

charge will include all meals, archery, rifle range (BBs and 22s), zip line, volleyball, basketball, gaga pit, water slides, paddle boats, and swimming. Bring some spending money for the snack shop/souvenir shop.

Our Summer Camp Bible lessons will be interactive, relevant and fun. If you are willing to serve as a teacher or counselor let us know.

Camp will be held at Timberline Camp and Conference Center in Lindale, Texas.

This first year of Old Fashioned Summer Camp will be very limited. No more than about 35 kids—through age 15. Contact Linda Benton at CEM for more information.

Please spread the word to other church folks.

Are You “Stirred UP”?

By Mardy Cobb

“Wherefore I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:6).

This verse is part of a letter from Paul to the young evangelist named Timothy. It has an important lesson that Paul wanted Timothy and all of us to remember. The lesson is that as Christians we must “stir up the gift of God” which is in us. That gift is the Holy Spirit.

However the Spirit is something that does not continue inside us without the involvement of our own will.

Just as Christ does not force anyone to become a Christian, so the Spirit does not automatically “stir” so to speak. Instead we must choose. And we must not only choose, but we must “stir” or self-motivate.

How do we self-motivate?

We do so by our convictions, by our attitudes, by our prayers and by our own internal “self-talk.” We need to put ourselves in remembrance of what our priorities are. Review them in our minds. We must remind ourselves of what we love, what we treasure, and what matters the most. We must take that passion and gratitude before the throne of God and ask in faith for his outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the encouragement, the motivation, the “stirring up” to stand strong in the truth no matter what the world throws at us.

Let’s make sure we stir up the gift of God’s Spirit inside us.

Memory Scriptures

Topic: Holy Spirit’s Role in Our Lives

Ephesians 5:18-19
 Galatians 5:22-23
 John 14:26
 Romans 8:26
 Acts 2:38
 John 14:15-17
 Luke 11:13
 2 Corinthians 3:17
 Ezekiel 36:26-27
 Ephesians 1:13
 Titus 3:5-6

Teachers Needed for 2016 Feast

By Allie Dart

Do you want to enrich your Feast experience? Do you want to increase your eternal reward? It’s easy! You can make this year’s Feast of Tabernacles the most memorable ever by helping teach the YEA classes. We need you! Yes we need men and women! Let me show you how easy and rewarding it will be.

YEA provides virtually everything you will need—state of the art, full color YEA books for five age groups. These come with a teacher’s guide giving all the instruction you will need.

The last thing we want you to do is to lecture our kids. Lecturing will bore them right out of your class.

YEA lessons are active forms of learning, designed to bring the kids back to class day after day. A student’s and teacher’s book, and a list of supplies we provide will be sent to you in plenty of time for you to prepare before you ever get to the Feast. Educators tell us that the learning process is not complete until the lesson is acted out in one form or another. YEA lessons are active forms of learning. And the good news is CEM will supply you with all the bits and pieces for these activities.

YEA lessons are active forms of learning, designed to bring the kids back to class day after day.

We’ll send you name tags, attendance and memory verse charts tailored for each theme, crayons, markers, glue, construction paper, and all other supplies necessary to teach each lesson. CEM will also send enough

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Born to Win

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.

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there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:9-13).

Why the still small voice—why not the fire?

There is nothing very complicated about it. If God thundered at you to get off your rear end and go get a job, accompanying it with a little sizzling fire and an earthquake, you would go out and get a job. But while it is a good thing to fear God in that way, it is not very mature. God does not want to drive us through life with a whip. He wants us involved in the process. So, most of the time, when he speaks to us, it is in a still, small voice that we can suppress if we want to.

He speaks to us in circumstances. He speaks to our heart. He speaks to us from the Bible. But he always leaves you free to choose. If he thundered in your face, a lot of that freedom goes by the boards.

So, now that we have an idea of why the Holy Spirit is a still small voice, how do you make use of that knowledge? You have to be quiet once in a while and listen. You have to talk to God once in a while and ask questions. You have to learn to be sensitive to God’s touch on your life. I doubt very much that there is any methodology involved in this.

Oddly, it is a matter of *fellowship*:

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any *fellowship of the Spirit*, if any bowels and mercies,” (Philippians 2:1).

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion [fellowship] of *the Holy Ghost*, be with you all. Amen” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

“Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. *Quench not the Spirit*. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

“Quench not the Spirit”—it is not immediately clear how we should take that. Is it a personal thing, or a collective thing? Do we quench the Spirit or suppress it when it is trying to speak to us? Do we quell the Spirit in others? Or is it both? At a personal level, I am sure it is possible to quench the Spirit when it is speaking to

you. It is also possible to grieve the Spirit. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: “Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

How do you grieve the Spirit?

Perhaps if we read it in context of the idea of fellowship with the Spirit we will understand. “If so be that ye have heard [Christ], and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:21-32).

It isn’t hard, is it, to see how all these things would grieve the Holy Spirit? What do I need to change so that I am not grieving the Spirit?

Now let me return to the idea of quenching the Spirit in a collective sense. Acts 13:1-2: “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, *the Holy Ghost said*, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

We have no idea *‘how’* the Holy Spirit said this. But there may be a more important point to glean from this. There is a fallacy abroad in the church that we all ought to be on the same road, the same page of the book, doing the same involved in every ministry that comes along. Your calling, I believe the Holy Spirit led me into my

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ministry. I don't speak of it often, because I don't want to be a name dropper. I don't say it now to claim any kind of authority or divine sanction. I say it to illustrate what I am talking about.

How do I know that the Spirit led me into this ministry? First, I have the natural talents to fit the ministry. Second, I have the gifts to go with the talents. Third, I asked for his leadership in this ministry. Fourth, God has blessed this ministry. It has borne fruit.

And there is more than that. Looking down the road behind, I can see so many turns in the road that were important in leading me to where I am. I have a definite sense of mission and the hand of God on my life. And the events have been in harmony with Scripture at nearly every turn.

How do *you* know that the Holy Spirit led me to start this ministry? You can't know it from any claims that I make. You can only judge by the fruits, not by any claims of divine authority. And perhaps you can tell by the leadership of the Spirit in your own life.

You are going to encounter a lot of people in your time who claim to be led by God. Some of them will be totally nuts. Some of them will be self-serving fakes. Some of them will be demonic. A few of them really will be servants of God. You can't tell by their claims. You can only tell by the fruits.

If, when I had started CEM, it had not worked, I would have concluded that I had not been led by the Spirit to start it. But even the fact that it works doesn't prove it is led by the Spirit.

The fruits have to be manifested in the lives of real people. Sometimes you aren't sure about the others and you have to look at the fruits in your own life. If it touches you, then the chances are it touches other people as well.

And in the end, you always have to be governed by the written word of God, the Bible.

One can't help but wonder where we might be today if we had been a little more receptive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. One can't help shuddering at the thought of where we might be if we hadn't listened at all. Let's invite the leadership of that Spirit into our lives and into our church.

*Teacher's Needed for 2016 Feast
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students' books for every child or teen to have one so he or she can read their lesson and learn their memory work prior to class. This will make participation much better.

YEA makes it easy! YEA makes it fun! And YEA makes a big difference! Our goal is to make each class fun, exciting, and maybe a bit noisy. We aim for each class to be a very memorable experience for every child or teen.

But we need you! Each class is designed to have two or more teachers. A husband and wife team would be wonderful. We like for men to help with the YEA program and have one in each class.. Some of our kids don't have a dad in their home and they need a father figure. Teaching a YEA class will be a very uplifting experience for men and women teachers. You'll look forward to seeing kid's smiling faces each day and getting a big hug. More than that, you'll see the dawn of understanding God's Word shine on the faces of kids as they learn the love of God.

***YEA makes it easy!
YEA makes it fun! And YEA
makes a big difference!***

The Feast is a shared experience. No one can do it all. We need everyone to do his part in making this the best Feast ever. This is done with service—people willing to give of themselves to make an eternal difference.

If you're willing to give of your time to enrich your Feast and bring our kids and teens to be in the first resurrection (the better resurrection), then please contact Linda Benton to let her know if you will be attending the East Texas Feast or the Feast at the Land Between the Lakes. Or you may want to suggest someone who has a servant's heart and is willing to teach our precious children or teens. Linda may be reached at lsb@borntowin.net. Linda's phone number is 1-888-BIBLE44. Looking forward to hearing from you. And may God bless you as you make a difference in the lives of our kids.