

## Subjective “Spirit Leading”

Subjective “Spirit leading” is when one is moved by imagined nudging and impulses, then attributes that imagination to the “leading of the Spirit”. It often never is in complete harmony with Spirit “revelation” in the Bible. It is sometimes outright contrary to Spirit guidance through “revelation” (Ephesians 3:3-5).

It is completely subjective as to whether it is the Holy Spirit instead of a deceiving spirit or just plain human desire and imagination. Yet, you get drawn into the language and thinking that imagines the Lord walking and talking with you, and then you start saying, “the Lord told me this” or “the Lord showed me that”.

Francis Chan offers stories from those who have experienced “real encounters” with God. He says each of us has the choice every day “to depend on yourself, to live safely, and to try to control your life. Or you can live as you were created to live — as a temple of the Holy Spirit of God, as a person dependent on Him, desperate for God the Spirit to show up and make a difference.” Yet, he is basically telling people to imagine the Spirit “showing up” in some emotion-driven and imagination-perceived way, and all such imaginations automatically becomes self-confirmation that the Holy Spirit instead of Satan as an angel of light is doing this “showing up” (cp. 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 John 4:1-6).

Beth Moore is another that uses this imagination-driven approach where her imagination of talks with God become conversations with God in which she reports “what God told me”. This kind of thinking is very dangerous, and yet some of our authors and speakers promote them as truly guided by God.

The real Holy Spirit showed up guiding the apostles into “all truth” (John 16:13). He revealed and confirmed “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Hebrews 2:3-4; Jude 3-4). He powerfully leads through that revelation (Ephesians 3:3-5; Hebrews 4:12). When we are listening to the Spirit in scriptures used correctly we are listening to the voice of the really Holy Spirit.

Imaginations must be cast down and not exalted to the level of God’s word. When a person does not “abide in the doctrine of Christ” but gives greater or equal guiding authority to their imagination of conversations with God, they have quit “holding fast to the head” (Colossians 2:19) and have “intruded into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18). This is “vain deceit” because it imagines conversations with God told as if it happened in reality, and this is a form of lying since God did not actually tell them anything. It is purely an adult form of make-believe and empty of real revelation. Be careful of those who promote such.

Adapted from Terry W. Benton