

Led by God's Spirit

Key Verse: *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."*
—**Romans 8:14**

In our Key Verse the Apostle

Paul, for the first time in his writings, uses the expression "sons of God." He attaches to it a profound requirement: to be considered a son of God, we must be "led by the Spirit of God."

Selected Scripture:
Romans 8:12-17

What does it mean to be led by the Spirit of God? Is it a personal or emotional feeling we have? Our changeable feelings are not a reliable gauge of having God's Holy Spirit. Additionally, they are not trustworthy to lead us, because feelings are largely a result of our natural inclinations and may easily change based on outward conditions.

Feelings should never be mistaken for faith. Yet there is a connection between faith and a hallowed feeling, similar to the connection between the root of a plant and its flower. Faith is permanent, just as the root of a plant is permanently in the ground. Feelings have their "season," so to speak, like the flowers of a plant. Just as a plant's root does not in all seasons produce flowers, likewise faith does not always produce an ecstasy of happy feelings.

Our feelings and emotions may sink down when we are in physical pain, going through the difficulty of poverty, or experiencing the death of a loved one. Yet, our faith in God and his promises may remain firm. As a consequence, we should not measure God's love and

power toward us solely by our feelings. If our faith is founded upon the scriptural promise that God is unchangeable, then our Christian life and love will flow steadily like a deep river. (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17) It will not be easily affected by a cold blast, nor obstructed by despondency.

Moses was not governed by his feelings or emotions when he stood at the edge of the Red Sea. Likewise, neither was Abraham when he offered up Isaac, nor the Israelite army when they circled Jericho seven days. The Apostle Paul was not guided by his feelings, nor persuaded by those of the brethren in Caesarea, after he had determined that the Lord's will was for him to go to Jerusalem, where it was certain that bonds awaited him.—Acts 21:8-14

God does not lead us by speaking audibly to us. He does, however, lead and teach us through his written Word, his "light" and "truth." (Ps. 25:4,5; 43:3; 119:105) The Apostle Paul outlines some of the indications that we are being led by the Spirit of God. Are we striving daily to "walk [Greek: live, deport oneself] not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?" (Rom. 8:4) Is our mind continually interested in "the things of the Spirit?" (vs. 5) Are we making every effort, assisted by God's Holy Spirit, to "mortify the deeds" of our body, including all our sinful tendencies? (vs. 13; Col. 3:8,9) If so, these are indications we are being led by the Spirit of God.

Elsewhere, the apostle identifies additional proofs that we are being led by God's Spirit. If our goal is to develop more of the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control," then we are being led by the Spirit of God. (Gal. 5:22,23, *American Standard Version*) If we are willing to follow the steps of our Master at any cost or suffering, these are further indications that the Spirit of our all-loving Creator is leading us.—Rom. 8:17,18 ■