

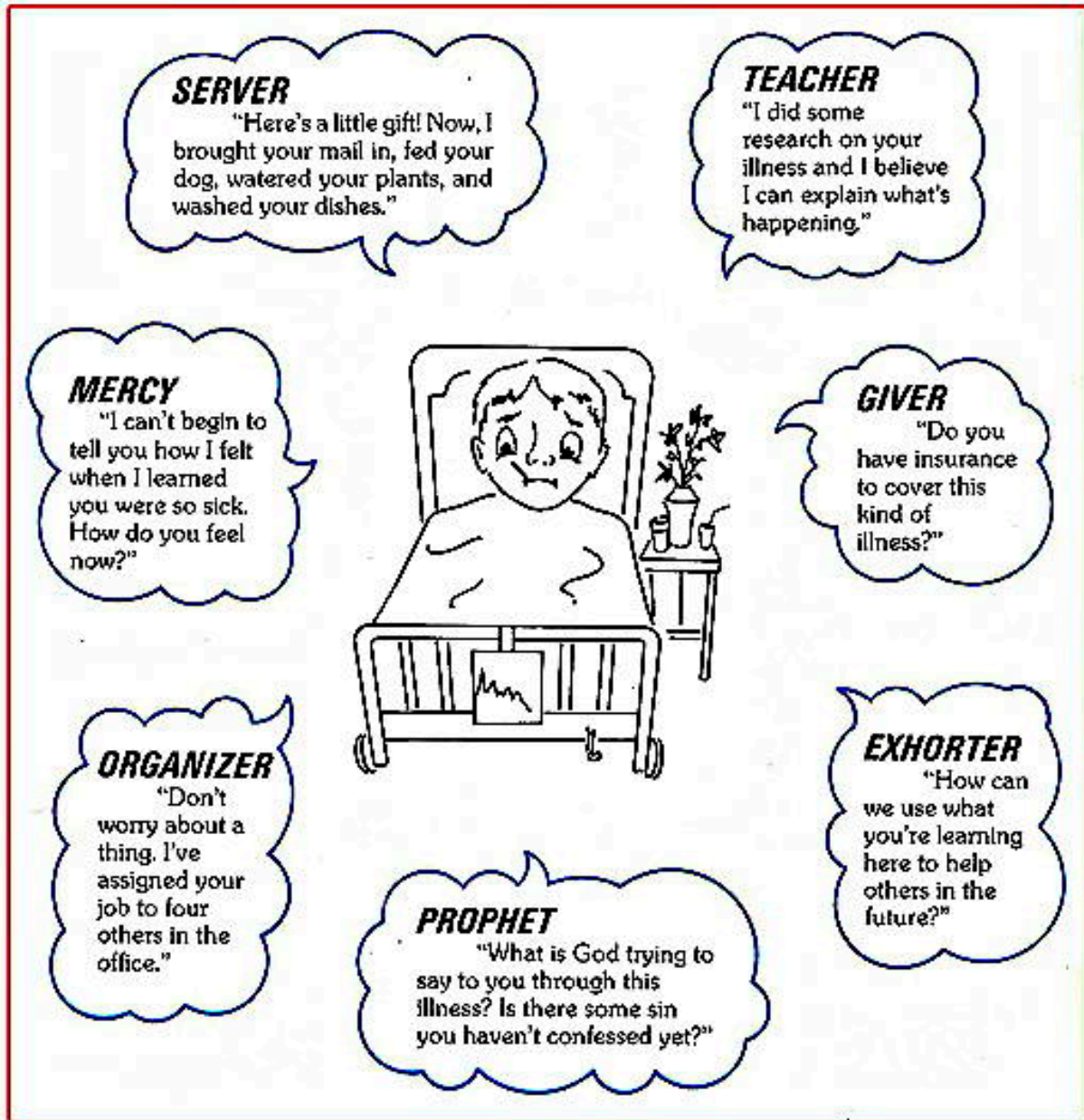
His Indwelling Spirit Is Our Lord's Guiding Voice

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Especially in times of an unsettled future, we who follow Jesus as our Lord must learn and practice three essential processes of obedient trust: *fervently seek the voice of the Holy Spirit, *test His word or prompting and confirm it, *then follow through in doing it. The Spirit's voice may be within you as you are seeking to hear His voice, it may "jump out at you" as you are meditating in God's Book, or it may come through the spiritual gifts in others.

In our book, *God's Instruments For War*, we noted different ways the Holy Spirit uses the various gifts He apportions to followers of our Lord Jesus:

- The Holy Spirit *speaks to release His message* through gifts such as prophecy and tongues.
- The Holy Spirit *reveals truths* through gifts such as apostle, teaching, knowledge, wisdom, evangelism, missions, exhortation, and interpretation of tongues.
- The Holy Spirit bestows gifts that *produce action* to bless others. These gifts include giving, healing, helping, mercy, and miracles.
- The gift of celibacy *frees a person* to be specially devoted to the Lord's purposes.
- The gifts of administration and leadership *can see the combination of people and goals* from God's vantage point and can give recommendations and guidance to achieve His purposes.
- The calm certainty of the gift of faith gives a follower of Jesus *a trusting abandon* to the will of God.
- The gift of shepherding is given to mature men of wisdom in whom the Father has bestowed *special nurture, compassion and a willingness to confront sin* – men who represent His Fatherly concern for His children.



This illustration from the Institute in Basic Life Principles gives you an idea of how different giftings operate when facing the same situation.

It's very helpful to your own spiritual journey and in developing mutual cooperation that you understand the various ways by which spiritual gifts operate. *Your* appreciation of the gifts of others will further *their* appreciation of your own gift(s).

How detrimental it's been to our Father's purpose of extending the Kingdom of our Lord on earth that the vast majority of Christians are not resolute in seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance, nor do they seek Him to use His gifting through them. Especially among Christian men, their view

of their spiritual life can be summed up in the stagnant dictum, **“I think, therefore I am”** (coined by the French philosopher René Descartes). When your mind supersedes your obedience to the Holy Spirit, you are functioning from the same ungodly framework as the unbelieving world.

In every Christian denomination or sect in which theologians and clergy have removed the biblical mandate to seek and hear the *rhema* of the Holy Spirit, males in particular falsely believe that God gave them reason and intelligence to replace trusting faith in the voice of the Holy Spirit. But that’s a supremely arrogant way of thinking: **“If you want to make God laugh, just tell Him your plans.”** However, He’s really *not* laughing at such willful rebellion against the divine purpose of the Holy Spirit.

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word [rhema] that comes from the mouth of God”
(Matthew 4:4).

Let’s paraphrase the mutual identity of response in a follower of Jesus: **“I hear, therefore I obey.”** We who love and follow our Lord are obedience-based. This means His Spirit tells us specific actions which we willingly obey *because* they come from the God we love and trust. This is one of the main reasons the Holy Spirit was given to followers of Jesus by both the Father *and* our Lord Jesus.

Examine yourself. Do you seek, obey, and act on the voice of the Holy Spirit? Or, do you reason the cost or consequences in your mind first so that you’re really the one in control?

- Could *you* obey like Abraham sacrificing Isaac (Genesis 22:2)?
- Could *you* obey like Joshua telling the Israelites to march around Jericho for seven days (Joshua 6:1-16)?

- Could *you* obey like Philip when the Spirit told him to get out of town after leading an entire city to trust in our Lord (Acts 8:26)?
- Like Philip, could *you* obey the Spirit when told to walk up to someone you don't know and be available (Acts 8:29,30)?
- Could *you* be like Peter and obey the Spirit when you're told to go to someone you have an aversion to (Acts 10:19,20)?
- Could *you* be like Paul and obey when the Spirit stops you from going somewhere or doing something (Acts 16:7)?

It's not that the Holy Spirit isn't speaking any longer. Rather, most Christians don't expect Him to speak, nor do they really want Him to. Most have never been encouraged to know how to recognize the voice of His Spirit. For centuries, people in pews have been instructed in God's Word, His *logos*. But they've been falsely led to believe that everything they need to know to live as a "Christian" is found in the pages of the Bible and/or in what their clergy person teaches them. They are satiated by what is put into their mind, even if those truths never emerge into responsive obedient action.

By contrast, it's through the *Spirit of our Lord* that we are daily being shown our heavenly Father's specific will, or His warnings about any unconfessed sin and the consequences if we don't repent. Consider this vital truth:

- The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible, the *logos*.
- The same Spirit reveals *rhema* to those who seek Him to disclose our Father's specific will.
- Because of the Holy Spirit, we should expect that His *logos* and His *rhema* be in accord.

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

We who follow our Lord Jesus in resolute determination to seek and obey His Spirit by His grace are never fractured the way so much of Christianity today is. It's the very lack of unity that testifies to the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit which pervades Christendom. And, the lack of love-grounded unity throughout Christendom is the greatest barrier to the world believing that we serve the One true God.

Mary's visit to her relative Elizabeth captures the essence of one follower who loves and serves our Lord Jesus meeting another: "*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Luke 1:41). We trust that you too are following our Lord Jesus as one who causes spiritual leaping in another who follows Him!

Mike & Sue