

The Slippery Slope of "I Feel Led" (Food for thought)

By an unnamed Pastor in the Mid-West

I was saved, by God's grace, when I was 19 years old. I started Bible College when I was 19 years old, I got married when I was 19 years old and I surrendered to preach when I was 19 years old. I guess that was a busy year.

As a young Christian I was energetic and enthusiastic about Church, college, marriage and Bible Study. I dreamed of being a full-time minister of the Word of God and pastoring a congregation that loved the Lord and hungered for His Word. I believed I had a bright future and that I was on the correct path.

At the close of my first year in college I was introduced to a program called "Summer Missions." By going to a mission field for three months I could earn six college credits and benefit from the wisdom and experience of working with a seasoned missionary. During the first week of summer break, I accompanied the youth group from my home church to an inter-state mission located in Denver, Colorado. We spent three days there and led in community outreach, youth programs and a three-day revival, which I preached. The missionary on the field was reported to be one of the best in our work. He was said to have a heart for souls and a reputation as a soul-winner. At the close of our three-day trip I inquired about the possibility of returning to work with him for the rest of the summer. He was delighted and I quickly set the wheels in motion to get signed up for the summer missionary program so I could apply it towards my college degree.

I went to Denver and worked with this missionary for three months. I enjoyed my time there and wish I could report that I learned a great deal but in retrospect I realize that I didn't learn much nor did we accomplish much.

At the close of my three-month stay, the missionary approached me with a serious question. He said he had been extremely discouraged on the field and had been debating whether or not to stay. He said that my visit was a breath of fresh air and that my company really inspired him to continue on and work for the growth of the church. He also asked me if I would come back. He said he had been praying about this for several months and **felt led of the Lord to approach me** on the matter. He said that he **felt certain that this was the Lord's will** and then he said, "**I've never been wrong about this feeling before.**" (Notice that this is in quotes. These were his words.) He had it all figured out. The wife and I could live in the basement of his house, which was really a complete apartment of its own. I could enroll in the Western Bible College and continue with my education and the wife and I could assist him in the work at the mission. He believed that **the Lord had laid this on his heart and that it was the Lord's will.**

I told him I would give it some thought and prayer and mention it to my wife when I got home and then get back to him. I wrestled with this for a short time but decided it was the thing to do. After all, this respected missionary felt good about it and he had never been wrong about these feelings before.

We sold all of our possessions. We only kept what would fit into the smallest U-haul trailer you can rent. We left our jobs and our home in Arkansas and headed west. We stopped off in

Hope, Arkansas to let our families know of our decision and tell them of our plans. While at my wife's parent's house, I called the missionary in Denver to inform him that we were on our way. He told me that he had just gotten off the phone with the director of missions to tell him that he was resigning and going back to Alabama to retire and devote his time to his Christian bookstore. The mission was to be dissolved and the property was up for sale. So, there I was. At my in-laws with no belongings, no job, no place to go and no future to look forward to. It was only the beginning of a series of bad decisions that led to nowhere.

I wrestled with this for years and I've gone over all of the "woulda - shoulda - coulda's". I take responsibility for my part in the failure. I shouldn't have been so willing to believe the impressions that someone else had. **The entire incident took place because of bad theology. Theology that replaced the Word of God with the fickle impressions of a sinner's heart. Feelings cannot be trusted. Yes, the Holy Spirit is in us and the Holy Spirit leads us but not by the reigns of our old nature. Not by our feelings which can be deceived by prejudice and circumstance.**

God has given us His Word and it is the only safe harbor in which to anchor our souls. The subjective authority of "I feel led" or "God has impressed me" or "I feel moved of the Spirit" is not the theology that Christians should rely on. Neither should they rest their hopes in such a theology or in those who practice such theology.

Brethren, if error is harmless then truth is useless.

Dear fellow bookworm,

What a tragic story, thank the Lord it turned out well in the end, though some problems had to be overcome. So what about you? Are you led by God? How do you know you are being led by God? Do you hear God's voice? Are you sure it's His voice? This question plagues some Christians and others ought to ask them. Many decisions have been made, many things have been done by those who say, the Lord led me to do, or the Lord laid it on my heart, and other similar things.

Have you ever said that? Should you have? Where you really led by the Lord? How can we know the will of God anyway?

For my fellow bookworms this year's first selection will answer all of these questions and instruct you as to what the bible says concerning this issue. This short 46 page booklet is loaded with information, is easy to understand, may change the way you think about being guided by the Spirit, and will give you assurance that you are being led and how you are being led by God's Spirit.

"Led by the Spirit, How the Holy Spirit Guides the Believer" by Jim Elliff is a must read and is a great book to give away to friends and family. Remember many what many believers believe about how God leads them is not scriptural so they need this book whether they know it or not.

Good reading,
Your fellow bookworm