

SECTION SIX
WALKING
ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT
CHAPTER ONE
DANGERS IN THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
ACCORDING TO SPIRIT

In the Christian life, nothing is more crucial than to walk daily according to the spirit. This will always keep the believer spiritual, keep him from the power of the flesh, keep him following the will of God, and keep him from Satan's attack. Once we know the function of the spirit, it is very important to walk according to it immediately. This is a minute by minute matter, and we must not be at all slack concerning it. We need to be extra cautious about receiving the teachings of the Holy Spirit but not following His leading. Many believers have failed, and this is the reason for their failure. Just receiving the teaching is not enough; following His leading is a must. We should never be satisfied with spiritual knowledge; we must treasure the matter of walking according to the spirit. We often hear talk about "the way of the cross." What really is the way of the cross? It is none other than walking according to the spirit. This is because in order to walk according to the spirit, all self-will, love, and thoughts must be put to death. To follow the intuition and revelation of the spirit requires us to bear the cross daily.

Perhaps all spiritual believers know something about the functions of the spirit as we mentioned earlier, but what they know does not last. They only sometimes have spiritual experiences because they still do not clearly understand all the functions and laws of the spirit. Therefore, they do not know how to follow the spirit in a lasting manner. After hearing this truth, their experience may testify that it is true. Regrettably, however, they cannot experience this continuously. If their intuition had sufficient growth, they could always walk according to the spirit and not be affected by the outside world. (Note: everything outside of the spirit is the outside world.) Many believers, due to their lack in understanding the law of the spirit, consider a life that is according to the spirit to be vacillating, standardless, and hard to practice. Many believers have determined to do the will of God and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit given in the spirit, yet they lose the boldness to come forward because they are uncertain of the trustworthiness of the intuition's leading. This is because they have not yet learned to apprehend the mind of the intuition. They do not know the intent of all the feelings of the intuition—whether to have them act or stop. Neither do they know the proper condition of the spirit; therefore, they cannot receive continual guidance from the spirit. By not maintaining the spirit in the proper condition, they often cause the spirit to lose its working power. Sometimes they receive a revelation from the intuition, but they do not know why it is given at a particular time. They also do not understand why they fail to receive any revelation when they diligently seek at other times. They do not know the reason for this failure.

They receive the revelation of the spirit because they sometimes unconsciously walk according to the law of the spirit; at other times, they cannot obtain the revelation because their seeking is not according to the law of the spirit. If they could always walk according to the law of the spirit as they did unconsciously, they would always receive the leading of the spirit. But they do not know this. If we wish to obtain revelations in spirit, know the will of God, and do what is pleasing to Him, we cannot afford to be ignorant of the law of the spirit. All the feelings of the spirit are meaningful. We must learn to discover their meaning before we can act according to the spirit's requirements

and walk continually according to the spirit. Understanding the law of the spirit is indispensable to walking according to the spirit.

Many believers treat the Holy Spirit's occasional working in their spirit as the most wonderful experiences of their life. They do not expect to have such experiences daily. They consider these as special occasions, possibly occurring only a few times in a lifetime. If they followed the spirit according to the law of the spirit, they would see their life becoming so transcendent. Nevertheless, they regard spiritual experiences as extraordinary and impossible to maintain constantly, not realizing that spiritual experiences should be their ordinary daily experience. To depart from this position and live in darkness is what is truly extraordinary.

Sometimes we seemingly receive a certain thought. If we know how to discern, we can tell whether this thought is from our spirit or from our soul. Some thoughts are burning in the spirit, but some are merely anxieties in the soul. Believers must learn to differentiate between them. After examination, a believer can easily discern between spiritual and soulish. Therefore, at all times, a believer must know how each part of his whole being is functioning. When thinking, he ought to know the source of his thought; when feeling, the source of his feeling; and when working, what power to use. Consequently, we can know what is from the spirit and follow it. We can also be kept from working according to feeling, and we can know whether the things that happen to us are of the spirit or the soul.

We know that our soul is our "self-consciousness." Hence, much of our self-examination and self-consciousness are completely of the soul and harmful. Why? This kind of self-examination and self-consciousness causes a believer to constantly consider himself, resulting in the growth of the self-life. Self-exaltation often comes from this self-consciousness. However, one kind of self-analysis provides indispensable knowledge for the spiritual journey, enabling a believer to truly know where he is and how he is walking. Harmful self-consciousness includes those proud or discouraging thoughts derived from considering one's own successes or failures. Beneficial self-analysis concerns itself only with those considerations that investigate the source of thoughts, feelings, and preferences. God desires that we should get rid of self-consciousness, but He does not mean that we should live in the world brainlessly. Excessive self-consciousness must be eliminated; but at the same time, we should know, through the Holy Spirit, what is going on within our own inner being. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully observe the activities of the self.

Many believers, although regenerated, seem to feel that they do not have a spirit. Actually, it is not that they do not have a spirit, but only that they do not feel that they do. One can have the sense of the spirit, but not know that these feelings come from the spirit. For every genuine, born-again believer, the real life to live by is the life of his spirit. If he is willing to learn, he will see what the sense of his spirit really is. One thing is certain, the soul can be affected by the outward world, but not the spirit. For example, after seeing beautiful scenery, enjoying peaceful nature, hearing melodious music, or touching many other outward surroundings, the soul can be immediately moved, resulting in a kind of emotion. However, this is not so with the spirit. If the spirit of a believer is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, it is independent of the soul. Unlike the soul, which depends on outward influences for its activities, the spirit can move on its own. Hence, the spirit can function in any kind of situation. Therefore, if a believer is truly spiritual, he can continue to work, whether his soul has any feeling or his body has any strength, because he lives according to the continually active spirit.

Practically speaking, the feeling of the soul and the intuition of the spirit are markedly different. Yet sometimes, the feeling of the soul is very similar to the intuition of the spirit. Sometimes these two are almost identical, and it is very hard for believers to differentiate. Although these times are rare, they still occur. Between the two it seems that only a hairbreadth of difference exists. At these times, a hasty believer cannot avoid being deceived. However, if he waits patiently, discerning again and again the source of his feeling, the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth to him at the proper time. If we want to walk according to the spirit, we must not act in haste.

All soulish believers, for the most part, have certain inclinations. Generally speaking, they either tend to the emotions or to the mind. When they desire to be spiritual and walk according to the spirit, they often fall into the trap of the opposite inclination. This means that an emotional believer will regard his cool rationality as the leading of the spirit. Since he realizes that his zealous life style in the past was soulish, he misjudges his present rationality as being spiritual. An analytical believer will treat his hot emotions as the leading of the spirit. Since he also realizes that his cool life style in the past was soulish, he regards his present emotion as being spiritual. Alas, these two only exchange places and they are not any less soulish. Therefore, we must remember the function of the spirit. In other words, to walk according to the spirit is to walk according to the intuition, because spiritual knowledge, fellowship, and conscience are all obtained from the intuition. The Holy Spirit uses the intuition to guide the believers. Hence, a believer should not imagine what is spiritual. It would suffice if he follows the intuition. If he desires to obey the Holy Spirit, he needs to know His will in the intuition.

Some desperately seek after the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Many times, their seekings are merely a search for happiness; there is an "I" behind it. Furthermore, if they feel the descending of the Holy Spirit, their body being taken over by some external power, or a warm heat flowing from head to toe, they consider that they have obtained the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can no doubt cause one to sense Him through his feelings, but seeking Him according to emotion is exceedingly harmful. Not only will this stir up one's own soul-life, but it may bring about the disguise of Satan. What is valuable before God is not our sense of the Lord's presence or our love toward Him through our emotion; rather, it is our following of the Holy Spirit in our intuition and living according to what He reveals to us in spirit. Often we see someone who has had the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" still living according to the natural life and not according to the spirit. Neither does he have a keen intuition to dissect the spiritual world. Only fellowship with the Lord in the intuition, not in the emotion, is valuable.

When we have read about the functions of the spirit recorded in the Bible, we realize that the spirit can be as hot as the emotion and as cool as the reason. But experienced ones in the Lord know the difference between what is from the spirit and what is from the soul. If a believer does not seek to truly know God in the intuition and walk according to the intuition, but simply postulates in the mind or, even more commonly, seeks after the stirring of the Holy Spirit in his feelings, he still is walking according to the flesh and causing his spiritual life to sink into a lifeless condition.

By observing Paul's conduct, we can better realize the importance of walking according to the intuition of the spirit. He said, "But when it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood, neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia and again returned to Damascus" (Gal. 1:15-17). Revelation is a matter of the spirit. Even when the apostle John was inspired to write the

book of Revelation, he received the revelation in spirit (Rev. 1:10). The Scriptures testify in unison that revelation is in the believer's spirit.

The apostle told us that after he received the revelation in spirit, knew the Lord Jesus, and realized that God was sending him to the Gentiles, he followed the leading in the spirit. He did not confer with flesh and blood; he no longer needed to listen to men's opinions, thoughts, and arguments. Neither did he go to Jerusalem to see the "spiritual seniors" to ask for their opinions regarding this matter. He followed the leading of the spirit all the way. Once he had obtained the revelations of God in his intuition and understood the will of God, he no longer sought other proofs. According to him, the revelation in spirit was sufficient to guide him, even though preaching the Lord Jesus among the Gentiles was an unprecedented move in those days. According to man's soul, the more we consider, the better it is, and the more we seek others' opinions, especially of those experienced in preaching the gospel, the better. But Paul only followed the spirit and did not care for the opinions of men, even of the most spiritual apostles.

Therefore, we should not follow the words of some spiritual person, but instead, the direct guidance of the Lord Himself in our spirit. Does this mean that the words of the spiritually mature are useless? No, they are still of great profit. Their reminders and teachings are helpful, but we still need to think carefully and clearly to see whether their speaking is from God, and we still need to receive the Lord's personal instruction. When we are not certain whether our stirring within is really the revelation of the spirit, the teachings of those deeply experienced in the Lord are very helpful. However, if we are certain that the revelation is from God, as Paul was in his day, we would not need to check with the apostles even if they still existed today.

If we read the context, we can see that the apostle considered it important that his gospel was by revelation and not taught by other apostles. This is a crucial point. Our gospel must not be obtained from listening to a certain man, from reading a certain book, or from a certain mental exercise. If our gospel is not by God's revelation, it has absolutely no spiritual value. Today young believers stress the matter of learning from an instructor, and spiritually advanced ones stress the need to pass correct beliefs on to the next generation. They do not know that these are spiritually worthless. What we believe, what we preach, and what we have are all a big zero if they are not by revelation. A believer may receive many wonderful thoughts from another person's mind, and yet his spirit may still be poor and empty. Of course, we are not expecting some new gospel, nor do we look down on the speaking of other servants of God, because the Bible clearly states that we should not despise prophesying. Nevertheless, we must know that revelation is absolutely indispensable.

Without revelation, all that has been said is in vain. We must gain the revelation of God's truth in our spirit, then our preaching can have spiritual results. Otherwise, the supply from others will still be useless. For each worker of Christ, revelation in the spirit must have the highest position. This is the foremost qualification of every worker. Only by this way can we do spiritual work and follow the spirit. Today too many workers rely on their intellect and thinking! Even the believers of the purest faith probably receive truth merely in their mind. These are all dead [works]. Let us ask ourselves, is our preaching from God's revelation or from man?

THE ATTACKS OF SATAN

Since our spirit, as the organ for fellowship between the Holy Spirit and the believers, is so crucial, it is no wonder that Satan utterly abhors the believers knowing about the functions of the spirit and walking according to the spirit. His aim is to have the believers live in the soul and "quench the Spirit." He can cause their bodies to be filled with many kinds of strange feelings and their minds with many wandering thoughts. Through these feelings and thoughts, he can confound the spiritual senses of the believers, so that in a state of confusion, the believers cannot distinguish what is really from the spirit and what is from the soul. He knows that "reading" the sense of the spirit is mandatory in order for a believer to be victorious. (How pitiful that many believers are unaware of this!) Therefore, he does his utmost to attack the spirit of the believers.

So let us repeat, in spiritual warfare a believer must never act according to his own feelings or some sudden thoughts. Never consider that a matter can never go wrong once it has been covered in prayer. Many believers believe that all of their thoughts while praying are God-given. This is a mistake. They seem to believe that their prayer can make their work infallible. They reckon that all of the work done through prayer is unerring. Nevertheless, they do not know that seeking the will of God is not the same as knowing the will of God. Moreover, the mind is not the place to know the will of God. He instructs us in our spirit.

Satan not only uses feelings and thoughts to cause the believers to live by the soul and not walk by the spirit; he has far worse devices. If he can succeed in causing a believer to live in the outward man through feelings or thoughts, he then takes a further step to disguise himself as the spirit within the believer. This is accomplished through first obtaining a position within the believer and then by fabricating many feelings. If the believer does not reject these feelings, they can gain ground within him. Soon they will overcome the function of the spirit or numb the sense of the spirit. If the believer is unaware of the enemy's tactics, the function of his spirit will be stopped. In following these deceiving feelings, he still considers himself to be following the spirit. Once the sense of the spirit stops and Satan takes this step to deceive, the believer will consider that God is leading him through his renewed mind. Through his failure to use his own spirit, Satan's operation will be secretly covered up. Once the spirit stops working, there can be no co-laboring with the Holy Spirit, and everything from God is cut off. Once the believer follows sudden thoughts and the feelings of the false spirit, he walks completely according to the flesh and soul, and there is no longer a genuine spiritual life.

If the believer is still ignorant, Satan will attack him even more fiercely. He may cause the believer to be void of the feeling of God's presence, but tell him that there is no need of feelings since he is living by faith. He may cause the believer to be in anguish without reason, but tell him that this is suffering with Christ in the spirit. In these conditions, Satan will deceive the believer through this counterfeit spirit, so that he actually follows his will. These experiences are common with spiritual (yet unwatchful) believers.

A spiritual believer must possess spiritual knowledge so that all his conduct and actions are according to his (spiritual) rationality. Consequently, he does not act according to impulsive emotion, some stress, or sudden thoughts in the mind. He ought not to be hasty or rushed. All of his doings must be done only after realizing that they are from God, based on observation with the spiritual eyes and apprehension with spiritual intuition. Nothing should be done out of impulse, feelings, or sudden thoughts. Decisions should only come after quiet, cool calculations and deliberations.

The most crucial point in a living of following the spirit is to search and test. In spiritual living, a believer must not pass his days in ignorance; everything that happens to him, whether thoughts or feelings (both happy and sad), must be thoroughly and carefully scrutinized to determine their source: God, Satan, or self. By nature every believer loves to be at ease. Whatever he encounters during the day is treated lightly; many times he even accepts the arrangements of the enemy. He does not investigate, but the Bible commands us to "prove all things" (1 Thes. 5:21). The power and characteristics of a spiritual believer come from "interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words" (1 Cor. 2:13). In the original language interpret means "compare," "test," "see together," and "judge." This power can be attained by all spiritual believers. The Holy Spirit gives them this power so that in their living they will not allow the things that are happening to them to go untested. Otherwise, it is very difficult not to live a life under deceit from the evil spirit.

THE ACCUSATION OF SATAN

Satan has another way to attack the believer who diligently follows the guidance of the intuition in spirit; he impersonates the believer's conscience to accuse him. In order to keep the conscience blameless, a believer is willing to accept the accusations of the conscience and remove all the things condemned by it. The enemy uses the desire of the believer to accuse him, causing him to mistake this as the condemnation of his own conscience so that he will be without peace, become weary of dealing with the problems, and lose his boldness to go on.

Spiritual believers must know that Satan accuses us not only before God but also within us. An accusation within disturbs the believers into thinking that they have erred and deserve some punishment. Satan realizes that believers must have boldness in order to progress in the spiritual journey. Therefore, through counterfeiting the conscience to accuse the believers, he causes them to believe that they have sinned, and thus they lose their fellowship with God. The difficulty with the believers lies in not knowing how to differentiate between the accusation of the evil spirit and the condemnation of the conscience. Often they are afraid of mistaking the condemnation of the conscience for the accusation of the evil spirit and, consequently, disobeying God. However, if they disregard the inner voice, it becomes more and more intense and even uncontrollable. Spiritual believers, therefore, not only must be willing to obey the rebuking of the conscience, but also must be able to discern the accusation of the evil spirit.

Sometimes, the accusation of the evil spirit is related to an actual sin of a believer. But sometimes the believer has not sinned, and the evil spirit still causes him to feel sinful. If the believer has really sinned, he can always confess immediately before God and ask for the cleansing of the precious blood (1 John 1:9). If the accusation still continues, it must be the voice of the evil spirit.

A believer can tell whether he has really erred and is under the reproach of his conscience or whether he is merely under the accusation of the evil spirit by asking himself whether he sincerely hates his sin. Before deciding whether it is the conscience or the evil spirit, it is very important that he ask himself this question: if I am truly wrong in this matter, am I willing to remove it and confess my sin? If he truly desires to follow the will of God and hates sin, then before submitting to the voice of accusation, he can be bold because he is not deliberately disobeying God. Having determined to do God's will, he must thoroughly investigate whether a matter was definitely done by him. He must clearly know and ascertain that it was his doings, because often the evil spirit

accuses us of unrelated matters. If this was his doing, he must examine whether it was truly in error. After fully realizing his failure through the teaching of the Bible and the leading of the intuition, then and only then is he required to confess his sins to God. Otherwise, even though he may not have committed any sin, Satan will cause him to suffer as if he had really sinned.

The evil spirit can give all kinds of feelings to man. He can cause one to feel joyful or sorrowful. He can make one feel as if nothing is wrong or as if there is gross error. Just because a believer feels fine, it does not mean he is really all right. Many times, when he feels all right he is really wrong. Similarly, when he feels that he is wrong, it may not be so. Perhaps he only feels this way and is not really in error. However a believer may feel, he must prove with certainty what is really true so that he can decide whether he has sinned or not. As for all the accusations, a believer should take a neutral attitude. Before he acts, he must determine the source of the accusation. If he is still unclear whether it is the reproach of the Holy Spirit or the accusation of the evil spirit, he should wait patiently for evidence and not be anxious. If it is from the Holy Spirit, and he is sincerely willing to remove it, the present delay is not due to his rebellion but to uncertainty. A believer must absolutely reject the confession of sins compelled by an external power, because the enemy often uses this strategy.

In short, genuine self-condemnation caused by the Holy Spirit sanctifies us; Satan's purpose is merely for accusation. His accusation causes us to frequently accuse ourselves. His aim is none other than inflicting sufferings on us. Not only so, if a spiritual believer accepts his initial accusation, Satan can also give him a false peace so that the believer is not remorseful over his actual failures. This is the greatest damage. Concerning the rebuke of the conscience, everything will be all right after the confession of sin and a request for cleansing by the precious blood. But the accusation of the enemy does not cease even after the removal of the accusing matter. The reprimand of the conscience leads us to the precious blood, but the accusation of the evil spirit causes us to lose heart and consider ourselves to be hopelessly incurable. Satan's purpose, through his accusations, is to cause us to fall by thinking that "since we cannot be perfect, then we might as well let the things run their own course."

Sometimes, Satan's accusation is added to the rebuke of the conscience. Sin is present and not only does the conscience condemn, the evil spirit also accuses. Then after the believer obeys the will of the Holy Spirit, the voice still will not stop. A believer's determination to be completely separated from sin, leaving no ground for the evil spirit to accuse, is very crucial today. In addition, we must learn how to discern the rebuke of the Holy Spirit from the accusation of the evil spirit —knowing when it is just the accusation of the evil spirit, and when both the condemnation of the conscience and the accusation of the evil spirit are present. Actually, no matter what sin there is, if it is truly sin, after rejecting it and asking for the cleansing of the precious blood, the chiding of the Holy Spirit ceases.

FURTHER DANGERS

In the life of walking according to the spirit, spiritual believers should be aware of other dangers besides the disguise of Satan and his various attacks. Many times our own soul, for reasons of its own (without the counterfeiting of the evil spirit), initiates a certain feeling to prompt us to act. A believer must know that his body has feelings, his soul has feelings, and his spirit also has feelings. Not all feelings are from the spirit. Therefore, it is extremely important not to mistake the feelings from the soul or the body for the

intuition of the spirit. In his daily experience, a believer must learn what really is his intuition and what is not. It is easy for a believer, after realizing the importance of following the intuition, to forget that other parts of his being besides his spirit have feelings, and thus he falls into error. A genuine spiritual living is not as difficult as some would think; in fact, it is rather simple. However, it is also not as easy as some may consider because it also has complex areas.

Here are two difficulties: first, we mistake other feelings as the intuition of the spirit; second, we misunderstand the meaning of the intuition. Such difficulties are often encountered in our daily life. Therefore, the teachings of the Bible (not verses randomly picked) are crucial. To prove whether the stirring within us and our intended actions are from the Holy Spirit, we need to check if this matter agrees with the teachings of the Bible. It is impossible for the Holy Spirit to inspire the prophets to write the Scriptures in one way, and then move in us in another way today. It is impossible that what the Holy Spirit has forbidden to others would be permissible to us today. The intuition in our spirit must be confirmed by the teachings of the Bible. By simply following the intuition and not the Bible, one will definitely go wrong. The revelation of the Holy Spirit sensed in our spirit perfectly matches the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

Our flesh likes to exercise its power everywhere. Therefore, we must be watchful of its incursions even while we are following the teachings of the Bible. We know that the Bible completely reveals the mind of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we think that if we absolutely follow the Bible, we surely must be in accordance with the desire of the Holy Spirit. Not so! Many times a believer can use his own natural mental ability to search the doctrines of the Bible and, having understood, can determine to act accordingly. In this situation, there is the danger of comprehending and executing through the fleshly power. Although what was understood and carried out is completely according to the Bible, there was absolutely no reliance on the Holy Spirit. Instead, it was totally in the realm of the flesh. Not only should the intent of the Holy Spirit, as understood in our spirit, be confirmed by the Bible, but even the Scriptures, as understood by us, should be executed through the spirit. We should realize that even in the matter of following the Bible, the flesh desires to be first! The spirit has not only the intuition but also the power. If the doctrines that we understand in our minds are not executed through the power of the spirit, they have no spiritual value at all.

One more matter requires our attention. There is a great danger for us to live excessively by our own spirit or walk excessively according to our own spirit. Although the Bible attaches great importance to the individual spirit of the believer, we may fall into the danger of being extreme. The importance of a believer's spirit is due to its being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We live and walk according to the spirit because this spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who makes known His will through our spirit. The guidance and restriction we receive are the guidance and restriction of the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit moves through our spirit when we pay much attention to it, we also pay considerable attention to our spirit, an organ usable by Him. But there is a danger, having understood the work and function of the human spirit, of relying solely on the spirit and forgetting that it is merely a servant of the Holy Spirit. The One that we directly look to for leading us into all truth is not our spirit but the Holy Spirit. We must realize that apart from the Holy Spirit, the human spirit is just as useless as the other parts of our being. We must never reverse the positions of the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. We have spoken in great detail of the human spirit only because believers today hardly know its functions. This does not mean that the position of the Holy Spirit within man is lower than that of

the human spirit. We need to understand the human spirit in order that we may better know how to obey and exalt the Holy Spirit.

This is greatly related to receiving guidance. From the beginning, the imparting of the Holy Spirit is meant for the entire Body of Christ. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer is due to His indwelling in the entire Body of Christ, because a believer is a member in the Body. The work of the Holy Spirit is of a corporate nature (1 Cor. 12:12). He guides individuals because He guides the whole Body. The guidance of the individual is for the whole Body. The actions of a member affect the entire Body. The leading of the Holy Spirit in our spirit individually must be related to the other members. All spiritual leadings are the leading of the Body. Therefore, even though we may have the leading individually in our spirit, we still should seek the concurrence, the proof, and the sympathy from the spirit of "two or three" other members. Such actions in the relatedness of the Body must never be neglected in a spiritual work. Much of the failure, fighting, hatred, division, shame, and pain is due to believers (with good intentions), who acted alone according to their own spirit. Hence, all the believers following the spirit ought to judge whether their guidance comes from the Holy Spirit according to the relatedness of the spiritual Body. Our work, actions, faith, and teachings must be by the relatedness of the members.

In his last journey to Jerusalem, the apostle Paul fell into this mistake. God allowed His best apostle to err in order to teach us. In Paul's mistake, God was especially merciful to cover him. Only out of this mistake could he witness at Rome and have time to write so many Epistles. Paul thought that he was "bound in the spirit" (Acts 20:22) to go up, but the Bible says that the disciples at Tyre, who were moved by the Holy Spirit, told him not to go up (Acts 21:4). Although we know that God was especially merciful to cover the apostle in this failure, we should see the principle of God's leading—not only is it of the individual but also of the corporate body. A spiritual believer should know when to go on alone, without regard to others' advice, and when to listen to his brothers.

In summary, there are many traps along the roadside of the spiritual path. A little carelessness can defeat a believer. We have no shortcuts. Learning a little knowledge cannot safeguard us forever. On the contrary, everything must be personally experienced by us. Those who were before us can only point out the coming dangers to save us from falling. There is no such thing as expecting certain methods to help us bypass considerable travel on the spiritual path. Faithful followers of the Lord will always see fewer unnecessary failures.