

Message Extras

a little something extra to keep you connected to Jesus this week

Message Extras accompany the [weekly message](#).

My family loves to visit the Smoky Mountains, and I have been on a road in the Smokies like the one Andrew described this week. But when I went down that road, I didn't read (listen) and learn from the home-made signs in the yards along the road, I remember reading, "turn around, your GPS is wrong," and I remember one like the one Andrew shared, "Your GPS is wrong! Get off my property!" But, the sign I remember most said, "Your GPS is wrong, but it's ok, come on in and stay awhile." I said to my wife, "What is that, Hotel California?" Sadly, I kept going on the winding road up the side of the mountain. I knew I was in trouble when the pavement ended. The last sign I read before I finally turned around said, "Rough Road Ahead. 4-wheel drive only. PROCEED WITH CAUTION." I learned a good lesson about listening that day as I made my way back down the side of the mountain. Every time we pass that road in the Smokies, my kids say, "Hey Dad, there's your mountain." And we all have a good laugh.

I don't know about you, but I can be stubborn. Sometimes I push right past those warning signs the Holy Spirit is putting right in front of me. When I fail to listen to Him, every time, inevitably I find myself winding my way back down the side of the mountain, losing valuable time on the way to my destination. In our walk with Christ, if we are going to walk in step with the Holy Spirit, we must learn to listen to Him so we can listen to Him and learn from Him.

As Andrew shared, when you receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, The Holy Spirit becomes your Advocate; He is your divine Counselor, Comforter, and Encourager. God gives you the Holy Spirit to teach you and help you on your journey. On your journey, there is a danger, when we don't learn to listen to the Holy Spirit, that we might end up actually listening to the wrong voices, like the scary sign that said, "come in and stay awhile." To be sure you are listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, let the word of God be your guide. As Andrew taught, you can be confident the Holy Spirit is speaking to you when you are convicted of sin, when you discover Biblical truth, and when you grow closer to Christ.

Let me pause and make an important observation here. Our enemy, Satan, was once an angel in heaven before he rebelled against Almighty God. The Bible says that Satan "masquerades as an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14) And in each of the tests that

Andrew shared to be sure you are listening to the Holy Spirit, Satan will seek to masquerade and mimic the work of the Holy Spirit in order to lead you astray. Here are some additional tests to consider as you learn to listen to the Holy Spirit:

- Where the Holy Spirit gently convicts of sin to lead you to repentance and freedom in Christ, the enemy accuses you of sin and heaps shame on you to keep you in bondage to sin.
- Where the Holy Spirit leads you to truth and guides you in truth, the enemy is a liar and even seeks to convince you a lie is the truth.
- Where the Holy Spirit leads you to know Christ and the power of His salvation, the enemy wants to convince you that it is weakness to trust God and that God is holding you back.

Ultimately, any voice, any message, that speaks contrary to the Word of God, is not the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will never lead you in a path that is contrary to His own word.

Finally, some of you might be thinking, "Why doesn't the Holy Spirit just speak to us plainly and clearly and tell us exactly what to do?!" To which I respond, HE HAS! "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17) AND "Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in him." (Proverbs 30:5) Take it from me, when God has to speak to me plainly and clearly, as that sign in the Smokies that read "PROCEED WITH CAUTION" did, it is because I am not walking in step with the Holy Spirit.

Do you want the Holy Spirit to speak to you, start every day by reading the word of God, and when you read the word of God, pray a very simple prayer found in God's word, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening?" (1 Samuel 3:10) Open your spiritual ears to listen and your heart to learn and you will be amazed at all the Holy Spirit has for you to learn. Blessings my friends!

- Think back to a time in your life when you ignored obvious warning signs. What lesson did you learn? Did you have to learn that lesson again?
- God has given you His word. What keeps you from reading His word, so you are able to listen and learn from the Holy Spirit? What changes do you need to make today to read God's word every day?
- Small Group / Bible Study challenge: In the above discussion, the example is given that the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the written word of God. According to the word of God, what are some other ways the Holy Spirit speaks to the children of God? (Here are a few passages to get you started: Job 33:14; Romans 12:6-8; Psalm 119:67-68; Psalm 19:1-2)

