***The Spirit of Counsel – Absalom  
  
RV77-02***

Please turn once more to our study in Revelation 4:5, which reads, "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderclaps, and voices. And there were seven flaming torches before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

The Lord Jesus Christ, one day, made a very amazing statement to His disciples, which is recorded for us in John 14:16-17. What he said to them was something about God the Holy Spirit, with whom they were all well-acquainted, and whom throughout their history they knew periodically came upon certain men and women for the accomplishment of certain tremendous tasks and spiritual achievements. The Lord Jesus, one, day turned to His disciples and said to them that this same Holy Spirit, in the very near future, would permanently indwell each of them. He would take up His residence within their bodies, making their bodies His temple. In John 14:16-17, the Lord said, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter (that is, the Holy Spirit) that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it doesn't see him, neither does it know Him. But you know Him, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you."

These are very simple words: "And shall be in you." You and I take it in stride, because we know that truth; we know it well; and, we delight in it. But when this was first enunciated, it was a tremendous revelation. It was a dramatic change from the Old Testament times when God the Holy Spirit did not indwell the Old Testament believers. There was a new era that was coming upon a different group of people, where God Himself, in the form of God the Holy Spirit, would permanently indwell them.

This event was first fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the church began. Since that day, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation – at the point where we receive Christ as Savior. At that point, we receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is present in each believer for the very specific purpose of performing certain outstanding ministries for each of us. During the church age, these ministries enable every believer to walk with God so as to enjoy great personal blessings. That is the hope of every spiritually-oriented person. It is to walk with God. There have been people on the scene of human history, such as Enoch, who had done that in an outstanding way – walked with God in such total fellowship, that Enoch didn't even experience physical death. God simply took him to the maximum fellowship with his presence in heaven. These ministries of the Holy Spirit are all designed to enable us to walk with God.

That's an easy phrase. A lot of people talk about it. A lot of preachers exhort Christians to do it. But how do we do it? How do we have the capacity to do it? That eludes people, by and large. It need not elude you if you understand the nature of these ministries of God the Holy Spirit which He is performing within us.

These have been symbolized for us in Revelation 4:5, which we have just read. They have been symbolized as seven flaming torches. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His humanity, enjoyed these same vital ministries, and they were listed for us in Isaiah 11:2. So, we take Isaiah 11:2, and we match it up to Revelation 4:5 in order to determine the meaning of these seven flaming torches which John sees before the throne of God in heaven, which represent the ministries of God the Holy Spirit.

**The Seven Flaming Torches**

The first torch symbolizes the deity of the Holy Spirit as being One with Jehovah. So, the One who administers to us is no less than God Himself. The second torch symbolizes wisdom, which provides divine viewpoint values to guide the individual believer in his choices. I need not press the point of how much we need wisdom in the choices that we all make. The third torch symbolizes understanding, enabling the Christian to discern the truth about people and circumstances. We live in a day when you and I need, in a great degree, the capacity to see through people, and to put circumstances in our lives in proper perspective. This flaming torch of understanding is provided for that purpose.

The torch of understanding is one which Jesus Christ also functioned upon in His humanity. It was the discernment that enabled Him not to be deceived by people. In John 2:23, we have an example of that: "Now when He (that is, Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the Passover in the feast day, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did, but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and did not need that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

What the Scriptures are telling us here is that Jesus Christ had the capacity of discernment. He had this flaming torch of understanding within Him so that He was able to know what people were really thinking, and what people were really after. He did not foolishly commit Himself to people that He knew were pursuing goals that were not compatible with the will of God. If you match that passage up to John 6:66, we read, "From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." The Lord Jesus Christ had the understanding to know that the person who is all enthusiastic for you one day, will be the one who is determined to cut you down the next day. The sin nature of man fluctuates back and forth. The one who is the loyal associate one day, will be the deserter the next day. The one who will be full of divine viewpoint discernment one day, will be all fouled up on human viewpoint perspective and values the next day.

**Jim Jones**

Therefore, our trust is not in the feeble capacities of man. The Lord Jesus had the understanding (the discernment) to know this. Christians who are lacking understanding from the Holy Spirit through Bible doctrine are vulnerable to great spiritual deception by a forceful leader. We recently showed you the very impressive and sobering film on the Peoples Temple Christian Church in San Francisco and the ministry of Jim Jones, one of the antichrists of our day. It showed one of the examples of how people can be deceived who think they are pursuing Christian goals, and who are pursuing, in fact, the objectives of the devil himself. These people did not have discernment, because one of the things they were not permitted to do there was to bring a Bible to church. Jim Jones forbad the people to bring Bibles to church. He discredited the Bible. He made fun of the Bible. He took it on one occasion and simply threw it on the floor from the pulpit in order to show his contempt, because the authority was not to be in Scriptures, but to be in himself.

So, the result was that this group of people could not possibly have had any kind of discernment and kind of understanding at all. They lacked doctrine. Therefore, they were completely blind. The result was that they were sold on the falsehood that God's will for people was equality instead of personal freedom. This was the great tragedy of that congregation. They looked out there and they saw hungry people; they saw people who needed clothing; they saw people who needed shelter; they saw people who were sick; they saw people who were lonely; and, they said, "We have to help make this a better world by helping those people." And their method of doing it was to seek a socialistic organization in which everybody would be equal. Had these people understood the Word of God, they would have understood that God never promises equality to the human race. Since the foul-up in the Garden of Eden, equality is impossible. The only thing which is possible is freedom for all of us to exercise our own equal abilities in whatever capacities God gives us. That is what we had been promised in the Word of God, and only that is a legitimate pursuit – personal freedom. These people gave up their personal freedom for the concept of finding something that could never be found.

**The Pursuit of Equality**

The number two man in the Peoples Temple was Tim Stone, who was a graduate of Wheaton College, and was a practicing attorney in Mendocino County. He was the assistant district attorney. So, therefore, he was nobody's boob. He was right there at the top, at Jones' right hand, and pursuing what somehow in his college days or someplace along the line, he had picked up the idea that Christianity is providing for people social and humanitarian needs, and that that was to be the goal of the Christian faith, and that that was to be achieved in some economic system which would make everybody equal. Finally, he began to have doubts; finally he began have to have reservations; and, finally, he began to see that something was amiss, in spite of his altruism. Finally, he decided that he had to cut out. And that was when Jim Jones said to him, "Look at that tree over there. Do you see the fruit on that tree? Nobody has the right to enjoy the fruit on that tree until everybody can enjoy it. And because Tim Stone, with all of his Christian college background, did not have a basis of stability in doctrine to see through that argument, he turned around and went right back into it. When they found the dead bodies in Guyana, Tim Stone's little 6-year-old son lay in death beside Jim Jones. Tim Stone paid a terrible price in the shattering of his marriage as well.

Where would you carry that logic? "Nobody should eat that fruit until everybody can eat it." That is the basic premise of socialism – equality, until everybody becomes so weak from starvation that nobody can grow any fruit, and nobody can produce anything. I'll leave it to you to carry that nonsense to its logical conclusion. Here's an assistant district attorney in the legal profession, which prides itself on logic and intellect. And he didn't spot the fallacy because he was obsessed with fulfilling what he thought was a Christian ideal to make people equal. Don't make any mistake about it. Understanding (discernment) is one of the most precious qualities you can have. Some of you have it, and some of you don't. It all comes through the Word of God, and it all comes through this flaming ministry of God the Holy Spirit within us.

913 people died because they did not have it. These people consequently accepted the deception that the Bible was filled with mistakes. It was not to be trusted entirely. They viewed Jim Jones as the incarnation of deity. They were willing to call him father. Jones looked over there to Italy. He looked at the Pope, and the word "pope" means "Poppa." He said, "That's a good idea. I want to be a Poppa, too." So, he told his congregation, "From now on, I want you to call me 'father.'" That was not very imaginative. I mean, at least he could have said, call me "daddy" or something like that – something with class and style. But these poor people, undiscerning – they called him that. They were deluded into believing that socialism was the ideal that was preached by Jesus Christ. He loved to tell them that the Christians put everything together, and they had all things in common. But he didn't teach them the rest of the story. In the Bible, it was a temporary move, and it was all done by free volition on the part of those who participated in that joining of their material forces together. These people thought that socialism was what Jesus taught, which was nothing of the kind.

I've heard people who argue that when Jesus Christ comes to set up the millennium, it will be socialism. Yet anybody who has read anything about the millennium knows that at the heart of it is the great promise that every man shall sit under his own vine and his own fig tree – private property. And he shall enjoy the fruits of his own labor. That is at the heart of the millennial kingdom setup. And that's pure capitalism and free enterprise.

These people were deluded. They were conned into believing that Jim Jones was performing miracle cures, including the raising of the dead. I'll say this for him: at least he was consistent. He brought in the Pentecostal viewpoint (the charismatic viewpoint) of healing, and people all over that auditorium were shouting for joy about the healings that were performed. He at least understood the doctrine enough that if you say you can heal a person, you should be able to raise people from the dead, because that's the ultimate expression of the gift of healing. So, he was at least consistent. But since he couldn't raise people from the dead, he had some of his associates die at the appropriate time in the congregation, so that he could resurrect them. And there were people all over, including the assistant district attorney of Mendocino County, who stood right there and saw these resurrections in the services, and believed that.

These people equated emotional orgies in the church services to great spiritual expressions, and as an approach to God. Because they could hear music that had a good beat to it such that they could swing and sway to it and clap their hands, they thought they had a wonderful rallying with the Lord.

These people impoverished themselves like you wouldn't believe in order to finance an enormous work of satanic human good. And I mean that they impoverished themselves. They were not little stingy 10%, 20%, or 30% givers. They handed it all over, and they looked to the socialistic organization to provide for them when they were sick; for their children's education; and, for everything they had. Sometimes they worked 24 hours at a time. How wonderful it is, the devotion that Satan can secure to his cause, and how we as Christians have to struggle for the real thing.

In short, because the Peoples Temple Christian Church in San Francisco was devoid of an understanding of the four basic divine institutions: volition; marriage; family; and, nationalism. They permitted themselves to be led down the road that led to their very death. Esteem the torch of discernment (the torch of understanding) which God the Holy Spirit is there to give you. Seek to develop it, and you will be nobody's sitting duck.

**Counsel**

Then there was the fourth torch, which symbolizes counsel to guide the believer in making divine viewpoint decisions. We looked at Solomon's son Rehoboam, who rejected the divine viewpoint advice of the older men, and he listened to the human viewpoint advice of his peers. And he lost most of his kingdom. It was split in two: ten tribes to the north called Israel; and two to the south called Judah. A believer needs daily advice from the Holy Spirit in order to make his life count for eternity, and to prosper during his time on earth.

So, let's continue now with the torch of counsel with an added point on that. A human being who lacks God's counsel will actually reject good advice even when he receives it, and he will choose bad advice. Please turn to 2 Samuel:16, where we have an example of how this works. A human being who does not have God's counsel will reject good advice when he gets it, and he will choose bad advice. All of us have had that experience. People have come, and they have given us good advice. People have come; we've been given bad advice; we've taken the bad advice; we've rejected the good advice; and, we wonder what in the world is wrong with us. People who are functioning on the torch of the spirit of God's counsel will not do that.

**Absalom**

In 2 Samuel 15, you have the story laid out for you of David's son, Absalom, who was one of his favorites, who mounted a rebellion against his father David. In 2 Samuel 16:23, we have advice which is given to Absalom by Ahithophel, who was once a chief counselor to David, his father. Ahithophel, being a wise man, gives Absalom advice on how to consolidate the takeover of power which he has executed from his father David. His father, David, is now in flight; out in the field; and, out from Jerusalem. Ahithophel comes to Absalom and says, "Now here's how you can consolidate the coup."

**Ahithophel**

The advice is given in 2nd Samuel 16:23: "And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the Oracle of God. So was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom." This source tells us that Ahithophel was a good counselor. He did have discernment and he gave good advice. The advice that he gave Absalom is in 2 Samuel 17:1:4: "Moreover, Ahithophel said unto Absalom, 'Let me now choose out 12,000 men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night. And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid. And all the people who are with him shall flee, and I will smite the king only. And I will bring back all the people unto you, and the man you now seek is as if all returned, so, all the people shall be in peace.' And the same pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel."

The advice that Ahithophel gave was very good advice. The fellow said, "Absalom, we've got your father on the run. His troops are scattered. I would advise an immediate pursuit. Let us press the attack (that is good military tactics) before the enemy can regroup (before he can consolidate his position). Let us hit him while he is off-balance."

Absalom listened to this, and said, "That sounds like good advice." The older associates with him said, "That is good advice – that way you will consolidate the coup. However, Ahithophel was going to be undermined by a higher power in this drama, for David himself had already turned to the Lord with a very specific request. We have that in 2 Samuel 15:31. This was a specific request relative to any advice that might come from Ahithophel. David himself knew how good of a counselor Ahithophel was, and the discernment that this man had in giving advice. Therefore, he knew that he would be advising Absalom. So, in 2 Samuel 15:31, David makes this request of God: "And one told David, 'Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.' David said, 'Oh Lord, I pray You, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.'" David very wisely took precaution by asking: "God, whatever good advice Ahithophel gives, turn it to foolishness." And the God in heaven listened to David, and that's exactly what happened.

**Hushai**

For in 2 Samuel 17:5, we have the description of how good advice is turned to foolishness: "Then Absalom said, 'Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he said.' And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spoke unto him saying, 'Ahithophel has spoken after this manner. Shall we do after his saying? If not, speak up.'" Absalom turns to another adviser, Hushai, and asks him to give advice. Unbeknownst to Absalom, Hushai was a double-agent, for Hushai was loyal to David. The very worst possible thing that Absalom could have done, he has done, because God is answering David's prayer to bring good advice to foolishness. The only way you can bring good advice to foolishness is if you yourself are out of touch with the mind of God, and Absalom was that.

Verse 7: "Hushai said unto Absalom, 'The counsel that Ahithophel has given you is not good at this time. For,' said Hushai, 'You know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are chafed in their minds, like a bear robbed of her whelps in the field. And your father is a man of war, and he will not lodge with the people. Behold, he is hidden now in some pit or in some other place, and it will come to pass that when some of them are overthrown at the first, that whoever hears it will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.''" Hushai said, "If you hit your father, you know you're hitting an expert in warfare, and when the first few men that are cut down, the news will get back that Absalom's people are being slaughtered by David, and even if only a few fall, everyone else will become fearful, because they know your father's reputation for being a winner in combat.

Verse 10: "'And he who is valiant, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt, for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and they who are with him are valiant men. Therefore. I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto you from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in your own person. So, shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falls on the ground. And of him and all the men who are with him, there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he goes into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we shall draw it into the river until there will not be one small stone found there.' And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, 'The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel,' for the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom."

Absalom is led by God to take the bad advice of Hushai, and to reject the wise counsel of Ahithophel. Hushai says, "Absalom, you take the troops; you go out there into the field; we will hit them with such a mass of men that we will overwhelm David; and, we will not permit anybody to escape. We will fall upon them like the dew falls upon the ground." That advice was taken by Absalom to be better than the advice of Ahithophel, who had volunteered to take a strike force of his own, and to make a commando raid upon Davis forces, and finish him off, because God was making good advice sound foolish in the ears of Absalom and his associates.

Absalom, accepted this as Hushai performed his double-agent role. 2 Samuel 17:15-16: "Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, 'Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and thus have I counseled. Now, therefore, send quickly and tell David saying, ' Do not lodge this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over, lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.'" Hushai sends the word to David of what the plan is. He says, "Here's where they think you are, David. Now, you get out of there, and you stand by, and you set up a trap for them." The point was: "You set up a trap for them to fall into, and while they are looking for you in one place, you will be in another place."

So the priest very quickly moved, and they took the word to David, and told him what the plan was. Absalom proceeded with what he thought was a splendid plan. It was bad advice. He has believed the wrong thing, and he goes into battle on that basis. In 2 Samuel 18:6, we have the tragic result of taking this advice: "So, the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim, where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter that day of 20,000 men. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. And Absalom met the servants of David.

**Joab**

And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught firmly in the oak, and he was suspended between the heaven and the earth. The mule that was under him went away. And a certain man saw it and told Joab, and said, 'Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."

Joab said to the man who told him, 'And, behold, you saw him? Why didn't you smite him there to the ground? I would have given you 10 shekels of silver and a belt.' And the man said unto Joab, 'Though I should receive 1,000 shekels of silver in my hand, yet I would not put forth my hand against the king's son. For, in our hearing, the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against my own life, for there is no matter hidden from the king, and you yourself would have been set against me.'

"Then, said Joab, 'I may not tarry thus with you.' He took three staves in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men who bore Joab's armor encompassed about, and smote Absalom, and slew him. And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel, for Joab had held back the people. And they took Absalom and cast him into a great pit in the forest, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him. And all Israel fled, everyone to his own tent."

The result of the information to David was that he positioned himself so that Absalom's forces were completely overwhelmed. Absalom, in his haste to try to escape, went tearing through the forest, riding on a mule, and got his head caught in some overhanging branches. Maybe his hair got caught, for he had long hair. He was one of the original long-hairs of history. It may have become entangled in the boughs. In any case, he was hung there and he could not break loose. And there they killed him.

Here was a man who was an impressive figure. You must remember this about Absalom. How did he have this kind of gall to want to pull off this kind of a coup against a great man like his father David? It's because he was so impressed with himself. In 2 Samuel 14:25-26, we read, "But in all Israel, there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty. From the sole of his foot, even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him. (This was one good-looking dude.) He only cut his hair once a year because the hair was heavy on him. Therefore, he cut it. He weighed the hair of his head at 200 shekels after the king's weight." That's about five pounds. When he cut his hair off, once a year, he had five pounds of hair that he cut off, which takes a lot of hair to weigh five pounds. That's a lot of hair. So, this should be a kind of a subtle warning to all longhairs – specifically, don't go tearing through a forest on a donkey with low branches overhanging.

Well, this is a classic example of a splendid figure of one who could have followed in his father's footsteps, and one who could have made an impact for the kingdom of God. Instead, because he was so impressed with himself, he decided to override God's will and God's plan, and take off on his own. Then God undermined what he was attempting to do by permitting him to leave bad advice.

**Bad Advice**

Take a lesson from this. Be on your guard not to take bad advice, because you may be sure that that is exactly what God will do to you, as He did to Absalom. If you are undermining His purposes, He will put you in a position where you will not listen to good advice. You will set your heart against it. And somebody else will come up with bad advice, and that you will believe.

**Lacking Divine Viewpoint Information**

That brings us to the point, then, that bad counsel comes from lacking divine viewpoint information. We have this taught us in Job 38:1-2. Bad counsel comes from those who lack divine viewpoint information: "When the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" God says to Job, "Who is this that's talking stupidity? Who is giving bad advice here with words that are not backed by understanding (by information)?"

Job 42:3: "Who is he who hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore, I have uttered that which I did not understood – things too wonderful for me which I did not know." Job said, I ran off at the mouth because I didn't have information." So, the lesson here is that Job is saying, "Don't be listening to people who do not have information. Don't be taking the advice of people that are nice to you; people that are friendly to you; and, people who carry some kind of reputation, unless you yourself are satisfied that they possess divine viewpoint information, and that they possess the information of doctrine in their minds. If so, you must be very careful about the advice that you take from them, because bad advice comes from people who do not have the Word of God residing in their thinking.

We may then point out that God's plans will prevail, and good counsel is compatible with that divine purpose. God's plans are always going to prevail, and good counsel will be compatible with God's purposes. We have this taught to us in Proverbs 19:20-21: "Hear counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter end. There are many devices in a man's heart. Nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord – that shall stand." All of the devices; all of the plans; and, all of the operations that you may devise as a human being – that's not going to stand. What is going to stand? God's purposes are going to stand. Therefore, any advice that is compatible with God's purpose – that's what's going to stand. That's the kind of advice that we should seek.

Then we want to point out that obeying the counsel of the Holy Spirit will preserve the believer from being harshly jerked into line by God. Many Christians place upon themselves a lot of grief because they are antagonistic to the thinking of God the Holy Spirit. If we obey the counsel the Holy Spirit, it will preserve us from having to be harshly jerked into line by God. Psalm 32:8-9 tell us that: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you shall go. I will guide you with my eye." That is the counseling ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Verse 9: "But don't be like the horse or like the mule that have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near onto you." God the Holy Spirit says, "I'm going to lead you. But if you insist on being like a horse or a mule, and refuse to follow my directions, then I'm going to treat you like a horse and a mule. I'm going to take the reins, and I'm going to jerk them until your mouth bleeds. I'm going to jerk you in line until it's so painful that you can't stand it. Finally, you, like a stupid horse or a stupid mule, will decide to do what I want you to do – to go in the direction that I want you to go."

So, that puts a little different slant on counsel. It's not only that we need it. It's not only that this is a tremendous ministry from God the Holy Spirit. It is something that we are not to ignore. It is something that we are not to treat with contempt. It is something about which God says, "My advice is what I expect you to follow. And if I have to do it the hard way, then so be it. We shall do it the hard way."

For the believer who lives according to the counsel of God, there is blessing. But for the believer who lives according to human viewpoint counsel of the unbelievers, there is grief. Therefore, Psalm 1:1 one says, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly." For the believer who walks in the counsel of the ungodly, there is nothing ahead but grief.

So, I'm happy to say that the believers of the church age (all of us) have the advice of God the Holy Spirit available 24 hours a day. There are a lot of people who are running around seeking the counsel of human beings. There are many preachers who make themselves wealthy by running what they call "counseling services," and they present themselves as super creatures (super capacity human beings) who can listen to your problem, and give you answers and solutions. For you and me, as believers, without having to pay $50 an hour, have God the Holy Spirit who says, "I will counsel you. I will guide you with my very eyes. I'll keep a watch over you. I will see to it that I am aware of what you do, and where you're going, and if you'll listen to My counsel, I'll put your feet on the path of blessing and prosperity."

However, if you want to listen to human viewpoint advice, then you will come to grief, and then you will compound your grief by going to human counselors and seeing what they have to say about it. There are few human counselors. The human counselors that are the most worthy to listen to are generally not portraying themselves as counselors. Some people go around saying, "I am a counselor. I am open for counseling. I have these hours for counseling. Does anybody want to knock on my door for counseling?" He is the one who generally doesn't know too much at all. He has a bloated vision of himself.

**The Source of Counsel**

The place you want to look for counseling is God the Holy Spirit. But that flaming torch can illuminate only what has been stored of the Word of God within your human spirit. There, He can guide you. There, He can direct you. The problem is to be receptive to this leading 24 hours a day. By the way, it is to be receptive from whatever source you receive it. Sometimes the counseling comes in very painful ways. Sometimes the counseling comes as a bruising jolt. There are some Christians who cannot take the counsel of the Holy Spirit with a bruising jolt. As soon as they're bruised, they evaporate and say, "I don't want any more of that." Whom are they kidding? Anybody with discernment knows exactly what's going on with them; knows exactly what's happening to them; and, knows exactly how they're tearing themselves and their lives up. They cannot take the counsel of the Holy Spirit unless it comes to them in a pleasant way. God the Holy Spirit does not always bring us the advice in a pleasant way.

So, be on your guard that if it comes in an unpleasant way, that you do not reject it. The members of the Peoples Temple in San Francisco rejected the Holy Spirit's counsel of warnings which were given through many discerning believers. Some believers saw what was happening. Members were torn apart because they saw what was happening to their loved ones. They went to their loved ones; to their parents; to their children; and, to their teenagers, trying to warn them that this was a deceptive man, and that this was an evil man that they were listening to, and they could not get through to them, because the teenagers looked at their parents, and made their typical mistake that they knew better than their parents, and therefore, their parents just didn't understand. Or they went to family members, and those family members had that superiority that they were members of a cause.

That was the keyword, by the way, in the Peoples Temple: our "cause." Once people get a cause, and they believe that this cause is from God, then they are blinded to anything. When their family came to them and pled with them to be aware that the cause was not the cause of God, but it was the cause of Satan, as much good as it may be doing, they could not listen to the counsel of the Spirit of God.

God the Holy Spirit is not always going to speak to you from a verse of Scripture that He gives you. He is not always going to speak to you through the public worship services. He will speak to us sometimes through sources that you hold in contempt, and that advice will be missed. You have to be open to the leading of the Spirit of God, and sensitive to Him. You must seek the leading of the Holy Spirit, and be open to His counsel.

What a great thing to realize that we not only have God Himself indwelling us, and we not only have wisdom that we know what's really worthwhile in life. Our value system and our priorities are in proper divine order. We not only have understanding, and we not only have discernment, but we have the advice of God Himself moment-by-moment. Are you going to try to spend some money wondering how to do it? You have a Counselor to guide you. Are you going to pursue a profession or a trade? You have a Counselor to advise you whether you should or not, and how to do it. Are you going to buy a new car? You have a Counselor to advise you how to do it. Are you going to go to the polls and vote for somebody? Boy, you do need a counselor there to advise you! But you have Someone to do it. Are you a youth club leader? Are you going to take a bunch of kids out into the wilderness? Are you going to take a bunch of kids out to the field? I'll tell you that that's one time a leader needs counseling. That's one time that you need an enormous amount of advice from God the Holy Spirit – when you're out in a field with a bunch of kids, especially when they're hungry, and they're all zapped-up to do something. That has to be somebody who has divine counsel that says, "This is safe. This is dangerous to do. This we do, and this we don't do."

This applies to whatever your situation is. It's not just those big, dramatic things, like, "I'm going to get married now. I need some counseling." If you're going to get married, and you need some counseling, you better not get married. You'd better get your counseling before you ever get to that stage. That's too late. But God is not only directing us and advising us with these big things, but with every moment-by-moment decision. That's how our lives go. It's one link that's attached to another. When you finish your day, it's a chain of individual links. It's a great thing to be counseled by the Spirit of God. If you are sensitive to Him, I guarantee you that He'll have a lot to say to you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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