***Selah – Christian Food for Thought***

***The Safe Guide of Scripture***

- by Sinclair Ferguson, excerpted from From the Mouth of God

Whenever someone prefaces a statement by ‘the Lord told me’ or ‘the Spirit revealed to me’ and is referring to anything other than Scripture they have in effect established a second canon for themselves, an additional stream of revelation. But, as William Bridge wisely noted, ‘who doth not know that the Devil will speak an hundred Truths, that he may crowd in one lye amongst them’.

At one time I was a regular customer of a very talkative hairdresser. She became a Christian—but remained very talkative! Customers now began to prefer a different hairdresser to avoid being confronted by the gospel!

After some time she told me how excited she was because her pastor was teaching her how to live so that every detail of her life could be directed by the Holy Spirit. This sounded wonderfully encouraging. But in fact her pastor had been teaching ‘How to listen to what the Spirit is saying to you immediately, personally, and individually each day’. I recall her telling me with enthusiasm how she had learned to listen to the Spirit so that she would know whether he wanted her to put on the right foot sock or the left foot sock first in the morning.

But this pathway of pursuing detailed obedience to extra-biblical revelation always has the same tendency. One day it will lead to complete paralysis—not putting on either sock because the Spirit has not ‘spoken’. Or it will lead to guilt when things go awry and then the individual fears that she may have disobeyed the Lord by putting on the wrong sock at the beginning of the day.

This is not to say that our inner promptings and ‘feelings’ are unimportant. They are, after all, superintended by the providential rule of God. But unlike Scripture, providential experiences do not come with their own built-in interpretation and we cannot claim for them ‘thus says the Lord’. They are the result of processes within our own minds—even if they seem to come to us without prior conscious reflection.

The more our minds are saturated in Scripture the greater will be its impact on our mental processes at every level. Thus subjective feelings and judgments can be healthy expressions of the impact of biblical teaching on our responses to life situations. But our approach with everything that comes into our minds is to submit it to God’s word in Scripture. It is our only safe guide.

 Instead of narrowing and confining life, biblical wisdom makes us strong and stable. Plus, unlike immediate guidance that bypasses Scripture completely, the patient study of God’s written revelation gradually transforms our patterns of thinking and molds our character. As we will see, it is in order to transform us by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:1-2) that God has given us the Bible in the first place.

This is only an excerpt, if you are interested you may purchase the book directly from Ligonier Ministries here: <http://www.ligonier.org/store/from-the-mouth-of-god-trusting-reading-and-applying-the-bible-paperback/>