

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD!

STUDY ELEVEN

Those Unidentified Inner Promptings

Selected Scriptures

There are times that the only way God can communicate to us—whether it is through conviction or assurance or direction or encouragement—is through unidentified inner promptings. I ask us to stop calling them intuition or coincidence or hunches and to identify them as the work of the Spirit.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

At times, we struggle to put words to our feelings. Your gut tugs you to go this way, not that way. Or we experience an urge to perform a specific task, but we just can't explain why. Simply, in our inner person, we are nudged toward one decision and have an uneasiness about another. Typically, we call such feelings *intuitions*.

At other times, we mentally grapple with a passage of Scripture without finding any glimmer of meaning or relevance. Then, without expectation or warning, the lightbulb flickers on. We've got it! The passage becomes clear, and we suddenly know how to put its truth into practice. Clarity usurps mystery. These moments we typically call *insights*.

Sadly, many Christians don't attribute intuition or insight to the Holy Spirit. We think of intuition or insight as random. However, Pastor Chuck wants us to think differently, directing our attention to biblical passages that show that such unidentified inner promptings (UIPs) do not come by chance or serendipity. Rather, they come from God.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Only God can truly help us benefit from our study of His Word. His Spirit guides us and helps us profit from what we learn. So take a moment now to quiet your mind. Posture your heart toward Him, praying that He would guide you during this study.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Because we cover multiple passages of Scripture on the Spirit's UIPs, we'll use charts combining the observation and interpretation steps of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method.¹ But first, why do we have such promptings? Humanity's beginnings recorded in Genesis provide the key.



Read [Genesis 1:26–27 and 5:1–3](#). What words are repeated in these passages that describe Adam and Eve's relationship with God as well as their relationships with their children (and the rest of humanity)?

There is an inner, secret chamber within our being because we have God's image. We call it our "heart," where the Lord speaks to us. He prompts us with inner promptings. He urges, He moves, He convicts, He directs, He stops, He guards, and He guides. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Our identity as God's image bearers, transmitted from Adam to us all, gives us a unique connection with God by which His Spirit can communicate with us in a way more sophisticated and intimate than any other creature in all creation.

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The Spirit Testifies to Our Spirit Psalm 139; Romans 8:14–16; 1 John 5:1–12	
A psalm and two passages from New Testament letters indicate how the Spirit prompts us inwardly—how the Spirit of God communicates with our spirit.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
Slowly read <i>Psalm 139</i> and simply note the verses that mention God’s inner prompting.	What does Psalm 139 teach us about these UIPs? (See especially 139:1–2, 23–24.)
Now observe <i>Romans 8:14–16</i> and note below how it describes God’s communication with us.	According to Romans 8:16, how does God’s Spirit teach us and confirm our relationship with God?
Lastly, observe <i>1 John 5:1–12</i> . What verses in this passage teach on God’s inner promptings in our lives?	According to 1 John 5:9–10, how does God’s Spirit teach us and confirm the identity of Jesus?

I want to suggest that the statements in Psalm 139 reveal secret inner chambers within the capacity of humanity—hidden capacities within the spirit of human beings . . . providing for the reception and the understanding of divine information. All of this is foreign to the natural world, but Christians have an ability to perceive spiritual things so that we can detect the hand of God.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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A Desperate and Lonely Prophet 1 Kings 19:1–18	
The evil and godless King Ahab and Queen Jezebel of Israel did not like the godly and upright Elijah. Elijah removed false prophets, worshipers of Baal, from Israel and he challenged the authority of Ahab and Jezebel. They vowed to kill him, so he fled. Away and alone, desperate and exhausted, Elijah received a UIP from God. Read the story in 1 Kings 19:1–18 .	
 Observation	 Interpretation
In 1 Kings 19:1–9, what indicates Elijah’s desperation, and how did God help him? Where did Elijah go?	According to 1 Kings 19:10–18, why did God give Elijah a UIP? How did it help Elijah?
In 1 Kings 19:10–18, how did God communicate with Elijah? How did the author emphasize this form of communication?	Why is this story significant for our lives today?
What did God’s UIP within Elijah convey to Elijah?	

You know what I call it? An unidentified inner prompting. U-I-P. God got through to Elijah’s spirit, and He touched him in a way that nothing in Elijah’s sensory perception could have grasped. Earthquake, wind, fire—none of that moved Elijah, but there was this gentle rustling. The result was that Elijah wrapped his mantle around himself and walked toward God rather than from Him. Elijah began to pursue further and further God’s plan for his life as the UIP broke what had formerly paralyzed him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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A Determined and Faithful Apostle Acts 20:16–24; 2 Corinthians 12:6–10	
Now let's turn from the Old Testament prophet Elijah to the New Testament apostle Paul. UIPs pop up throughout the narrative of Scripture. First, we examine Paul's last talk with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, exploring what the Spirit taught him through a UIP. Then we explore a short passage from his letter to the church in Corinth explaining what God taught him in his weakness through a UIP.	
 Observation	 Interpretation
Begin by observing Acts 20:16–24 . What verses in this passage indicate a UIP?	According to Acts 20:16–24, what benefit did Paul receive when God gave him a UIP?
Next, observe 2 Corinthians 12:6–10 . In what situation did Paul receive a UIP? What did God teach Paul through it?	According to 2 Corinthians 12:6–10, what might have happened to Paul had God not given him a UIP?
	Why are the two UIPs mentioned in this chart's passages significant for us today?

I think this kind of inner prompting explains the courage of the first century and twenty-first century persecuted Christians. I think this explains how the Reformers could stand against the established church and the popular majority opinion and do so alone knowing they might face persecution. The Spirit of God gave them not only the awareness of danger but also the confidence that they could bear it. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Application: Discerning Your Own UIPs

Often, UIPs from the Spirit come to us in moments of quiet, in stillness while we are alone, like Elijah's experience. Therefore, reflect on your habit of abiding with God. Do you enjoy being alone with Him to still yourself before Him? What about these alone times do you find difficult, and what could you change to make your alone time with God more effective and meaningful?

Not all our inner promptings come from God. It takes discernment to know which UIPs come from God and which do not. *Know that every inner prompting you receive from God will align with His Word.* God does not contradict Himself. Therefore, if you are unsure an inner prompting comes from God's Spirit, Pastor Chuck encourages you to *back off*. Take time. Return to Scripture. Think through the situation. Pray. Seek counsel. Record a time below when you have had to back off like this. Do you need to do so now?

Lastly, if you are certain the Spirit is prompting you, the next step is to *stand strong*. Do not waver in doubt or unbelief or fear. Don't dwell on "what if" scenarios. Move forward with conviction, trusting God as your ever-present help in times of trouble. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Have you had to stand strong lately? How so? Do you need to now?

Indeed, you are fearfully and wonderfully made. God knew you while you were being formed in your mother's womb. He made you with a specific plan in mind and enjoys lavishing His love upon you, communing with you through His Spirit, and guiding your decisions with those inner promptings. Don't forget to stay tuned-in to the Spirit. We never know when we'll need His quiet whisper.

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A FINAL PRAYER

End this study by recording your prayer below. Reflect on the passages you learned above and include the truths from them in your praise and petition to Jesus.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "*How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?*"

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2008, 2019, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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