Understanding Intuition

Our “sixth sense,” or intuition, can be defined as “the ability to sense or know immediately without reasoning.” It is the gut feeling you get without thinking about something. Instead, you just “know” what is going on. Some people are more tuned in to their intuition than others. Some of us have learned to ignore our intuition, due to our childhood or past relationships.

How does it work? While no one knows exactly, even though it has been researched and discussed extensively, here are some things that will help you understand it better.

- The limbic system in our brain is the seat of our emotions. It also monitors danger, responds to pleasure, and helps us respond in order to survive. It triggers hormonal responses to what it perceives is going on. Our experiences shape the limbic system. It stores memories of past experiences, including trauma and pleasure. It helps to protect you, but at a more automatic level than your thought processes.

- The neocortex is responsible for thought. Here we use analysis to figure out what is going on and make judgments based on that analysis. We use past experiences to help us decide, but at a conscious level. The neocortex thinks about things *after* the limbic system responds.

- Some of our intuition is related to the limbic system automatically responding to our environment to protect us. Many of us have tuned out this level of our natural, instinctual, God-given protection. It isn't wrong to listen to this part of our being. God created us with this natural sense.

- Intuition can cause physical sensations, as the limbic system is connected to your body. For instance, feeling sick to your stomach can be a sign that something is wrong. So can feeling uptight, hypervigilant, uneasy, nervous, or fearful.

Many of us are too busy to slow down enough to attend to our intuition. Others dismiss it as unreliable. But be wise and learn to pay attention to your intuition. Take note when you sense that something isn’t right. Follow your hunches. Pay attention to that gut feeling. Watch for body sensations that tell you something is
wrong. Recognize when you “just know” something. Listen to your intuition.

As Christians, we have to ask how intuition works along with the Holy Spirit showing us his truth and God’s voice speaking to us. We can sense God leading us to do something or giving us a thought that we know isn’t from ourselves. While we must always test these against his Word, we will often know that the thought resonates with our spirit and that it is telling us the right thing to do. Intuition goes hand in hand with God’s Spirit. He can surely use our intuition to speak to us and communicate to us.

There is no guarantee that every hunch you will have is right, or that every thought or leading you have is from the Lord. But you should always consider and pay attention to it. When we ignore it, we often miss valuable information that can help us make better decisions.

By Karla Downing

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Relationship Prayer

God,

Help me to pay attention to my God-given intuition and to the voice of your Holy Spirit. Teach me to discern the message.

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Relationship Challenge

❖ Think about how intuition works in your life. Purpose to learn to pay attention to it.

❖ Think about how the Holy Spirit speaks to you. Purpose to learn to pay attention to God’s voice.

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Scripture Meditation

John 16:13-15

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is
yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

Acts 13:2-3

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

John 3:5-8

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

We have to remember that we can’t explain or understand everything.

If you have any questions you would like to ask Karla, please feel free to email her.

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