

**Six Steps to Discern  
your  
Spiritual Achilles Heel  
in  
Christ  
and with  
the  
Holy Spirit**

### **Step 1. Call upon the Holy Spirit for Help.**

The discernment of your Spiritual Achilles Heel (SAH) can only be done in depth and in truth with the help of the Holy Spirit, who indwells you and is your greatest Counselor.

Therefore, in your own words, ask our God to reveal to you your Spiritual Achilles Heel that hides behind your giftedness. Pause your reading now and in your very own words, ask the Holy Spirit to provide you with the due diligence to follow the steps herein and know that with the Spirit's ever assured help you will come to discern your Spiritual Achilles Heel as well as gain deeper insight into the heart and mind of Christ Jesus. 1

### **Step 2. Take notes as would a detective or researcher.**

As you begin the search to identify your Spiritual Achilles Heel, take notes that you can refer back to as your research moves forward. Use whatever allows for easy reference such as an electronic file, a notebook or a note app in your smart phone. Whatever works for you is the best method to use. 2

### **Step 3. With the Spirit's help be keen to Jesus' teachings**

Daily, listen closely to the Holy Spirit speaking to you through Jesus' gospel teachings—and all the exhortations of the Scriptures. Humbly accept the truths the Spirit reveals to you and respond to the clear promptings of the Holy Spirit by repenting whenever you see that your thinking or behaving is not in line with those commandments and exhortations. Likewise, as regards to this process today, humbly repent of your SAH as the Holy Spirit reveals it to you and helps you see how it limits the potential for a transformed life in Christ and, at the same time, grievously injures the dignity and worth of the other. 3

### **Step 4a. Be Careful (attentive)**

a. be careful not to justify any anti-gospel behaviors because of a belief that you are a particular psychological diagnosis, or a personality profile (Myer-Briggs, DISK, etc.) or that any family of origin traits are set in stone within you. All these might provide insight into your current behaviors but you are much more than even your most socially useful propensities as you are created in the image and likeness of our God of pure love and pure goodness and you have been redeemed to become ever more like Christ. Thus, you must judge yourself—as God judges you—according to your Christ likeness and 1 Cor 13:4-8 like love 24/7. 4

#### **Step 4b. Be Careful (attentive)**

b. be careful to remember that Jesus' gospel teachings and all the universal exhortations in Scripture transcend gender, race, culture, time and geography. They also cut beneath all feelings—feelings are not a criteria used in the Scriptures to determine what is “good” or what is “sinful/evil.” In the name of the gospel, therefore, seek with a very keen and critical mind and with the help of the Holy Spirit to discern your Spiritual Achilles Heel as it always stands in opposition to love and Christ-likeness and hides behind your giftedness. 5

#### **Step 4c. Be Careful (attentive)**

c. be careful to remember: "The good person brings out good from the good stored up in the thoughts of their hearts and the evil person brings out evil from the evil stored up in the thoughts of their hearts." [Mt 12:34-36]

Your giftedness—both because of its making you shine and your propensity to compulsively employ it—will blind you from seeing the intentions of your heart when using it. Blinded, you cannot critically assess why you are employing your gift: Service? Self-glory? Blinded, the Spirit cannot help you see your sins/evil and repent. Un-repentant, the Spirit cannot transform you, make you whole, ever more truly and fully human, ever more like Christ. 6

#### **Step 5a-c: Seek Feedback Beyond the Scriptures!**

(a) Ask feedback from your wisest and most prudent friends to help you see your “character flaws”—sins. Listen attentively. Do not defend yourself.

(b) Deeply ponder the criticisms/reproaches of those who are closest to you whether you think them wise or not.

(c) Prudently seek out insight from the wisest person at work with whom you interact on a daily basis. If, for any reason, it is not wise to ask, listen attentively for clues about your SAH. 7

#### **Step 5d-e: Seek Feedback Beyond the Scriptures!**

(d) Recall those criticism in your life that most irritate you—from whatever source—and gain useful insight into your SAH.

(e) If you have children/teens—while remaining the moral guide, devoted, nurturing, ever responsible parent—listen attentively to their spontaneous critique of you. Do not ask them to critique, just ponder it when it comes. It might give insight into your SAH.

(f) And if you have a life partner who is safe—has never physically

harmful or threatened you—and who does not put you down either verbally or with body language or tone of voice, and if you can manage your own reactivity, ask their feedback about your strengths. Then, look behind your strengths to discern if your SAH that is hiding there.

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**Step 6: Once you have identified your SAH, you must:**

**a. repent;**

**b. resolve, in the Spirit's power,** to give your SAH no quarter in your life;

**c. believe that victory is possible**—however long it may take—because of the amazing gift from Christ Jesus, the very Holy Spirit, who now actively indwells you as your Faithful Partner, Coach and Loving God. He will lead you into the battle and empower you to subject your SAH to the mind of Christ.

**d. believe without wavering** in the Holy Spirit's relentless love of you and his profound desire and power to make you whole, ever more like Christ in the thoughts of your heart!

**e. daily review your SAH** in Your Daily Examination of Conscience! 9

**Examples of**

**Spiritual Achilles Heels**

**that are hidden**

**behind One's Giftedness**

**Overview:** As noted, your SAH is hidden behind your giftedness. You might have been recognized by others privately for your giftedness and perhaps even publicly. However, whereas your giftedness served the common good of the larger organization, in your personal relationships, it can have a very different effect unless you are very self-aware. If not, your blindness will cause you to compulsively use your giftedness and that will inhibit the formation of deep connection in your relationships and doom any sense of mutual respect and partnership. But you are not aware of this. Blinded, you are probably engaging in anti-gospel behavior but actually think you are "bettering" the relationship(s). 10

## **The SAH Hidden Behind Leadership Giftedness**

A blind, compulsive use of your leadership giftedness can easily cut off those closest to you from setting forth their own life vision, needs and hopes for the relationship or the family. People can easily become mere appendages to your leadership goals, victims of your driving vision, your leadership giftedness. 11

You transfer your vision, ideas and thoughts and the assumptions you operate under as a public leader into your home. Your oblivion to the inner dynamics in other people makes it either unsafe or impossible to be in real partnership with you. Such an attitude might work in business—often it doesn't work there either—however, it will never work in your personal relationships. Always leading with your giftedness will shred to pieces meaningful personal relationships at home and most likely at work--be that a business or church. 12

Consequentially, it is likely that others experience you as a very rude and abrasive person in your personal life. Rudeness is basically contempt for others and their opinions and thoughts. In effect, you disdain the image of God in them. It is sin whether you are aware of your sin or not. If you do not regulate your leadership giftedness, you will sin continually against those closest to you. See it for what it is.

**Repent and be made whole!**

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## **The SAH Hidden Behind the Gift of Teaching/Speaking**

To those of you who are good teachers, speakers, or preachers and to those of you who are witty and seem wise because of the craft of your words, your blindness to the mind of Christ might be far greater than you realize. You teach and teach and preach and preach and talk and talk. You run the risk of never really listening to others. Moreover, you rarely, if ever, listen critically to yourself when speaking to your closest relationships. Because of your ability in speech and quickness in thought, you never really take the time to clarify the effects on them of your words and lack a certain integrity in sharing with them as you spin words outside of what is really going on in you. 14

Likewise, you seem blind to the fact that you need to develop the balancing virtue of listening from your heart. Because your default is to be witty and quick to speak, you can easily twist rightful questioning of your opinions with barbs of cynicism, sarcasm and subtle put downs that create verbal or silent rage in your wounded victims. 15

Unaware, due to your blindness, these deadly sins flow off your tongue like a babbling brook. However bubbly they sound to you, they drown out the voice of others. Moreover, it limits the possibility that those closest to you will ever experience that their voices have been heard by you. The risk is that you are so unable to stop talking and start listening that you will reinterpret, avoid or void very concise admonitions in Scripture that apply to you: "Keep a tight reign on your tongue! If not, you, deceive yourself, and your relationship with God is worthless." "Everyone should be quick to listen, then, slow to speak." [Jas 1:26,19] 16

Moreover, if you have stopped your ears to these admonitions, you have surely blocked Jesus' severe admonition about speaking without weighing your words from ever reaching your heart and influencing your behavior: "I tell you, that you will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word you have spoken. By your words, you will be acquitted, and by your words, you will be condemned." [Mt 12:35-36] This admonition is from Jesus, your Lord and Savior, who loves you deeply.

**Repent with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and**

## **The SAH Hidden Behind the Gift of Administration**

To those of you who are gifted in implementing tasks and believe that getting things done is at the heart of the good future willed by God always remember that God gave you the gift of administration to serve the common good and hold steady in your mind that your gift is not the essence of the gospel of love nor of relationship life.

In fact, while your gift to plan and get things done is a good, God has a severe warning regarding your planning and getting things done according to your time table. The warning is about the sinfulness of your unfettered belief that Your plans—both your micro daily planner and your macro big picture plans—are God's will. They might be if you are humbly seeking God's will always, but they are most definitely not God's will if you are asking God to bless Your plans. 18

God calls you to repent of your blindness: "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will do business and in a year make so much money [or win souls for Christ, or pursue a career, or ...].' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it be God's will, I will live and do this or that.'" Instead, you boast and brag about the future. All such boasting is evil! [Jas 4:13-15] Some of you commit the sin of worrying about your plans getting done. "Do not worry about things, but strive first for the kingdom of God" [Mt 6:33] 19

Moreover, you brag about your past successes in similar fashion. It seems that your past successes have caused you to forget the teachings of Jesus: I am the true vine. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me; ... apart from me, you can do nothing." [Jn 15:1-6]

Moreover, you tend to think that your relationships will improve if one more task gets done. Your anxiety to get your idea of the most important things to get done causes you to bully those closest to you and you have no idea of how they see life or of how they are

enriching your otherwise sterile life of thinking that "getting things done" is the very essence of "love". 20

In addition, your ability to get it done, puffs you up in such a way that not only at home but also at work, you risk being blind to how others perceive you. You are also blind to the scriptural teachings about being puffed up: "I, your God, oppose the proud but give grace to the humble. Therefore, clothe yourself with humility toward everyone. Humble yourself so that I may lift you up with my mighty hand, as I so desire to do!" [1 Pet 5:5-6.] But in your blindness you do not see this nor your sins.

**Repent and be made whole! 21**

## **Go Discover your SAH! Then, repent and be made whole!**

Your giftedness and your blindness to your Spiritual Achilles Heel might be different from those given, but you now have both a process and a few examples that can help you in identifying your own.

### **A Cautionary Note if You Believe You Have No Gift(s)**

If you are one of those who sadly believes that you have no gift from God for the common good, take great hope in the fact that you do. "Now to each one a spiritual gift is given by the Spirit for the common good, so we can help each other. [1 Cor 12:7] 22

Take heart! Many who have believed they had no gift to offer have prayed to God and discovered their gifts. One such person came to discover that she had the greatest gift of all, the capacity to love her enemies and to pray for those who persecuted or demeaned her. 23

So keep in touch with God; follow the Holy Spirit's guidance and and with the Spirit (1) keep listening to and following Jesus' gospel teachings along the narrow path less travelled and (2) use Six Steps herein to help your grow in understanding, insight And wisdom. Count on the Holy Spirit to guide you and to keep you safe in the processes. Once you become aware of your SAH—whatever it might be—**repent and strive to have the mind of Christ 24/7 in partnership with the Holy Spirit.** 24

### **Let us end in prayer:**

In you, O Lord, there is victory; in you I have hope. Help me, therefore, to confront the momentary pain from any irritation or frustration and the momentary enticement of any form of pleasure. Help me to put powerful brakes on my actions 24/7 so that we—you, Holy Spirit, and I—might safely navigate the horseshoe curves of My Spiritual Achilles Heel and then speed up along the straightaway of the narrow path of love taught by Jesus. 25

Help me, Divine Coach and Teacher, to put my thoughts in slow motion and to weigh even my micro thoughts with you before

they take root in me. Help me to hear your voice and ponder before speaking. And, when I finally do speak or let a thought take root in me, help me make sure that what I am thinking or going to say is what is pleasing to ABBA. Then, I will delight in the fruit of the Spirit bubbling up and budding forth in my every thought, word and action. 26

I thank you, Lord, that the Spirit has led me to see my sin and to repent. Assured of God's forgiveness by the Holy Spirit I humbly and thankfully receive the transformative power of the new creation coming alive in me by the inner working of the Holy Spirit. I believe in this truth, in this reality. Increase my faith in this divine revelation that the Father always provides this new creation, this transformative power and grants profound inner peace to the contrite and humble of heart.

[Go to "CALMS in CHRIST: The Daily Examination of Conscience" for deeper insights into "repentance", "the new creation", "transformation unto Christ likeness" and "the joy of God's salvation gifted to the contrite of heart".] 27

Spiritual Coach, Divine Reminder of Jesus' gospel teachings, I am delighted, humbled and honored that you indwell me. By your promptings and power, I shall grow in self-control. By your constant presence in me I shall become a docile, devoted and disciplined athlete. I will follow all your training instructions. I will run the race to win the crown. I will fight the good fight against my SAH in order to gain the mind of Christ 24/7. Holy Spirit, Come! Let us fight this good fight together. Then, by your inner artistry in me, I shall become a finely sculptured disciple whom Christ can use so that sinners will return to the Father. [Psalm 51] and the Father and I shall work together to build up his peace-filled kingdom of love on earth as it is in heaven. 28