

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GUIDANCE

(How to determine the Will of God)

“Which way should I turn?” “What should I do?”

Every person I know has asked both of those questions at one time or another.

I have often asked: **“What does God want me to do?”**

Learning how to determine God's perfect will often leaves us perplexed about just what He would have us do. But, the encouraging thing is, God HAS promised to guide us:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and HE SHALL DIRECT YOUR PATHS.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Trusting the Lord and acknowledging Him is much better advice than leaning on your own understanding!

I was on top of a six-story building one time and looked down at the traffic in the street below. Cars weren't moving very fast and one impatient driver decided he would pass everybody in the right bicycle lane. Bad choice! I could see down the block where a car was stalled . . . and I could see in advance that the frustrated driver was going to become even more frustrated! If that driver could have seen things from my upper perspective, he would have patiently waited for the traffic to clear. So it is with the Lord . . . He can see down the road of our lives and knows that when we decide to do things our own way we are headed for trouble. It is so much better to seek the Lord's will and follow His lead rather than doing things our way!

The Lord directed the paths of His ancient Hebrew people when they were in the wilderness with ***“a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.” Exodus 13:21*** That would be easy enough to follow . . . but His ways are not so obvious anymore and we need to be more discerning, plus, the Lord wants us to seek Him because He desires a real RELATIONSHIP with us. He desires FELLOWSHIP with us!

TAKE THE QUIZ!

#1 What are the three things we should do if we want God to lead in our lives?

ANSWER: TRUST in the Lord / LEAN NOT to your own understanding / in all your ways ACKNOWLEDGE HIM

#2 How did the Lord lead the people of Israel when they were wandering in the wilderness?

ANSWER: CLOUD BY DAY and a PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT

#3 Why does the Lord want us to seek Him?

ANSWER: God desires a RELATIONSHIP and FELLOWSHIP with His people.

The Lord directed the paths of His ancient Hebrew people when they were in the wilderness with “**a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.**” **Exodus 13:21** That would be easy enough to follow . . . but His ways are not so obvious anymore and most of us wonder:

HOW DOES GOD DIRECT HIS PEOPLE TODAY?

The Scriptures tell us how we can determine His will so we don't have to go through life in confusion. Actually, there are several things involved all of which need to be considered, but before we lay them out point by point this little story may be of help.

A missionary was traveling by ship over a hundred years ago. The captain informed Him that they would soon be at their destination and would be going through a very narrow inlet to reach the harbor. It was in the middle of the night and the missionary had been told that coming into that narrow inlet was very difficult and could be dangerous because of rocky cliffs on either side. So, he asked the captain – “*How do you pass through that dangerous inlet in the middle of the night when you can't even see the dangerous cliffs?*” The captain pointed out in the darkness – “*See those fires that are equally spaced up the side of that distant hill? When we have all those fires lined up in a straight line, we know that we are right in the middle of the safe passage-way!*”

In determining God's perfect will, we need to consider ALL of the following:

GOD'S WORD: God will never guide us in violation of the teaching of His Word. If you are considering a decision that is contrary to the teaching of God's Word, you can be sure that God is not the one who is leading you! “***Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.***” **Psalm 119:105** We would be wise to seek the counsel of God's Word before venturing out into the darkness by ourselves.

MATURE COUNSEL: You may be a new Christian and do not know much about the Bible so the counsel of a more mature believer would certainly be of great value: “***Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.***” **Proverbs 11:14**

When wise King Solomon died, the kingdom went to his young son Rehoboam. He sought wisdom from two different groups of people: “***King Rehoboam consulted with the old men who stood before Solomon, his father, while he yet lived, and said, How do you advise that I may answer this people? And they spoke unto him, saying, If you will be a servant unto this people this day, and will serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who were grown up with him . . . And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him . . . so Israel rebelled against the house of David . . .***” **1 Kings 12:6-8, 13, 19**

The once strong kingdom of Israel experienced civil war and was tragically divided all because young King Rehoboam sought the advice of the wrong people. Seek out a wise person or several wise people who are well-versed in the Scriptures and listen to their words of wisdom.

GOD'S SPIRIT: The Bible tells us that God's Spirit will guide us: “***For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.***” **Romans 8:14** The Spirit of God leads us, but we

need to become aware of His voice and prompting as He communes with our spirit. It is also important that we are living in continual fellowship with the Lord if we are asking Him to guide us.

The Spirit of God teaches us and guides us into all truth: Jesus said: “ . . . **when He, the Spirit of God is come, He will guide you into all truth.**” **John 16:13** Sometimes a familiar passage of Scripture just seems to jump off the page and become very real to us. That is the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God, and we need to be increasingly aware of His leading.

QUIZ:

#4 God's Word is a LAMP and a LIGHT so we don't have to walk in darkness.

#5 There is safety in a MULTITUDE OF COUNSELORS

#6 What caused the kingdom of Israel to experience civil war and become divided?

ANSWER: BAD ADVISE and ADVISE FROM PEOPLE WITHOUT MUCH EXPERIENCE.

#7 Who will lead us and guild us into all truth according to John 16:13?

ANSWER: THE SPIRIT OF GOD

PRAYER: As you seek the Lord's perfect will, the first thing you should do is ask the Spirit of God to reveal God's will and to show you Scripture that makes your decision very obvious. As we ask the Lord to guide us clearly, we need to make sure that our desire is for His glory and not just our own benefit!

PEACE: The Spirit of God gives us peace when we are walking in obedience to the will of God. On the other hand, He can cause our hearts to be filled with great anxiety and turmoil when we are walking contrary to God's will. ***“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” Colossians 2:15***

One might ask: “How can I experience the peace of Christ?” The next verse tells us: ***“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom . . .” Colossians 2:16***

Years ago, I had the opportunity to design a large church in the Washington D.C. area. I had been chosen for this task and it would have been very beneficial to me financially. But the Spirit of God gave me no rest until I finally withdrew my proposal and declined their generous offer. Later, I discovered that I had been spared real heartaches as the architect who performed the work faced many difficulties from the client including costly litigation. The Lord had spared me from this grief. It pays to pray for peace and when your heart is filled with anxiety you would be wise to not proceed with your own plans.

OBEDIENCE: I have learned (sometimes the hard way) that the Lord does not show us His way until we are willing to submit to Him in obedience. A disobedient and resistive heart leads down a pathway of trouble and grief. The Bible speaks clearly about having an obedient heart and yielding ourselves to the Lord: ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable***

service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and PERFECT WILL OF GOD.”
Romans 12:1-2

The world's opinion about just about everything is directly opposite of the ways of the Lord. We read in **Proverbs 14:12**: ***“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”***

QUIZ:

#8 What is the first thing we should do when we are seeking God's perfect will in our lives?

ANSWER: PRAY and ask God to show you the right way

#9 According to Colossians 2:15, what is a good indicator that we are walking in God's perfect will?

ANSWER: PEACE OF CHRIST in your heart

#10 God will not show us His perfect will until we are willing to OBEY His will and FOLLOW His leading!

#11 “There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way of DEATH.”

OPEN and CLOSED DOORS: Sometimes making the right decision seems easy when we have open and closed doors before us, but there needs to be a word of warning here: **NOT EVERY DOOR IS GOD'S PERFECT WILL FOR OUR LIVES.** We need to pray sincerely that God will close doors that we are not to walk through. Sometimes when these doors close we may experience real disappointment, but we need to remember that God's ways are so much better than ours!

DELIGHT IN THE LORD: ***“Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:4***

This verse is often misunderstood. It does not mean that if you delight in the Lord, that He will give you any thing you want . . . a new car . . . a new house . . . or whatever. If you truly delight in the Lord, He gives you new desires . . . His desires! I pray continually that I will love the things that God loves and hate the things that He hates. Ask the Lord to plant a new set of godly desires in your heart!

FAITH and GOD'S PROVISION: ***“Commit thy way unto the Lord and He shall bring it to pass.” Psalm 37:5***

To commit our way unto the Lord is a big step of faith. To desire His perfect will means that we are willing to put our own dreams and wishes aside and to seek to serve the Lord with all of our heart. Notice the promise at the end of *Psalm 37:5* . . . ***“Commit thy way unto the Lord, and HE SHALL BRING IT TO PASS.”***

A little boy and his Daddy went town on a horse drawn wagon years ago. When they were in the old general store the owner told the youngster to reach into the jar and grab a hand-full of candy. The little boy hesitated so the store owner reached in and filled both hands of the big-eyed boy. On the way home his Dad asked him – “*Son, why were you so hesitant to grab a hand full of candy back there in the store?*” The little boy’s answer was really quite profound – “*Daddy, his hand is so much bigger than mine!*” We need to remember that **GOD’S HAND IS MUCH BIGGER THAN OURS . . .** His ways are always best! We need to remember what David said in *Psalms* 56:9 – “***This I know, that God is for me.***”

Don’t be satisfied with God’s **PERMISSIVE WILL** . . . sometimes He let’s us go our own stubborn way and we live to regret it. We are much better off with God’s **PERFECT WILL!**

Two final thoughts:

PLEASE HIM: In everything we do, let’s seek to please the Lord Jesus Christ! That is a sure way to determine God’s best for your life!

BE PATIENT and wait upon the Lord: This is perhaps the hardest part of seeking God’s perfect will. I, for one, am usually anxious to move ahead with my plans and waiting upon the Lord is a great test of my faith. We need to allow the Lord to open or close doors in His time.

We need to ask the Lord to make His way perfectly clear!

QUIZ:

#12 **WARNING:** Not every OPEN DOOR, OPPORTUNITY, or DESIRE OF OUR HEART is God’s perfect will for our lives.

#13 We need to pray sincerely that God will CLOSE DOORS that He does not want us to walk through.

#14 If we truly delight in the Lord, He will give us NEW DESIRES (HIS DESIRES)!

#15 Don’t be satisfied with God’s PERMISSIVE WILL . . . that can often lead to great difficulty.

#16 Nothing is better than knowing God’s PERFECT WILL!

#17 What is one of the most difficult parts of determining God’s perfect will for our lives?

PATIENCE and WAITING ON THE LORD