

15. Guidance

Acts 16:6-12

A common problem that many Christians have is understanding how we are guided by God. After becoming a Christian, we no longer live for ourselves:

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

[20] 我已经与基督同钉十字架，现在活着的不再是我，乃是基督在我里面活着；并且我如今在肉身活着，是因信神的儿子而活；他是爱我，为我舍己。

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

[19] 岂不知你们的身子就是圣灵的殿麼？这圣灵是从神而来，住在你们里头的；并且你们不是自己的人； [20] 因为你们是重价买来的。所以，要在你们的身子上荣耀神。

Now we live our life for God, we need to know what His will is in every situation we find ourselves in.

The first rule we must live by is the law of God. God gave us a moral law in the Ten Commandments, and this should always be our guide:

John 14:15

If ye love me, keep my commandments. [15] 你们若爱我，就必遵守我的命令。

God may wish to allow evil to come to pass, but that is His prerogative and never ours:

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

[20] 从前你们的意思是要害我，但神的意思原是好的，要保全许多人的性命，成就今日的光景。

Acts 2:23

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

[23] 他既按着神的定旨先见被交与人，你们就藉着无法之人的手，把他钉在十字架上，杀了。

So, if a moral decision is to be made, then the decision is easy. But what if a decision needs to be made which has no moral content, such as choosing a job, or choosing where to live? Neither is morally wrong, so which is God's will? Paul had this problem:

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

[6] 圣灵既然禁止他们在亚西亚讲道，他们就经过弗吕家、加拉太一带地方。

He was guided by the Holy Spirit. But that means many different things to many people. In the end, we are responsible as individuals for our actions, and our discernment of the Holy Spirit's guidance within us. It certainly does not mean following men, whoever they are, whatever leadership position they have got for themselves:

Psalms 146:3

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

[3] 你们不要倚靠君王，不要倚靠世人；他一点不能帮助。

Micah 7:5

Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

[5] 不要倚赖邻舍；不要信靠密友。要守住你的口；不要向你怀中的妻提说。

We should follow the Holy Spirit directly dealing with us. Paul went through Phrygia and Galatia, which were regions of Asia. But they were somehow uneasy preaching there, and never settled. By this, Paul discerned that the Holy Spirit had forbidden them to preach there altogether, and was positively looking for the place the Lord was leading them.

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

[7] 到了每西亚的边界，他们想要往庇推尼去，耶稣的灵却不许。

They came to Mysia, another province of Asia. They tried to go into Bithynia, another province of Asia, "*but the Spirit suffered them not.*" The Holy Spirit again gave them unease, and this time didn't even allow them to go into Bithynia at all. So where were they to go? Furthermore, what about the poor souls in all these Asian provinces? Who was going to preach the gospel to them if Paul and his colleagues were forbidden to go there? Actually, that's not their problem. They leave that with the Lord. We just go where He sends us. They continued through Mysia:

8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

[8] 他们就越过每西亚，下到特罗亚去。

Troas was on the coast. They'd run out of places to go. Where was the Lord leading?

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

[9] 在夜间有异象现与保罗。有一个马其顿人站着求他说：请你过到马其顿来帮助我们。

Paul had a vision. Many people say they've had a dream or a vision or a prophecy. But we're not to follow them:

Jeremiah 23:28

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.

[28] 得梦的先知可以述说那梦；得我话的人可以诚实讲说我的话。糠秕怎能与麦子比较呢？这是耶和华说的。

We must also stick close to the Word of God. In Acts 1:16-26, the apostles choose a replacement for Judas. Firstly, Peter, reading Scripture, realises their need to do this:

Acts 1:16

Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

[16] 弟兄们！圣灵藉大卫的口，在圣经上预言领人捉拿耶稣的犹大，这话是必须应验的。

Then they get a shortlist of suitable candidates:

Acts 1:21-22

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

所以，主耶稣在我们中间始终出入的时候 必须从那常与我们作伴的人中立一位与我们同作耶稣复活的见证。

Then they pray:

Acts 1:24

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.

[24] 众人就祷告说：主阿，你知道万人的心，求你从这两个人中，指明你所拣选的是谁，叫他得这使徒的位分。这位分犹大已经丢弃，往自己的地方去了。

That's the pattern to follow. Their casting the lot then put an end to any strife.

Here, Paul has this vision of a Macedonian saying, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” That alone is not guidance.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

[10] 保罗既看见这异象，我们随即想要往马其顿去，以为神召我们传福音给那里的人听。

Paul told His companions the dream. And all of them immediately realised that was where the Lord was leading them. We’re not told they prayed, but I’m sure they did.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

[11] 於是從特羅亞開船，一直行到撒摩特喇，第二天到了尼亞波利。

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

[12] 从那里来到腓立比，就是马其顿这一方的头一个城，也是罗马的驻防城。我们在这城里住了几天。

After making the decision, they looked for confirmatory signs from the Lord. They sailed “with a straight course” all the way. On a return journey it took five days:

Acts 20:6

And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

[6] 过了除酵的日子，我们从腓立比开船，五天到了特罗亚，和他们相会，在那里住了七天。

The facts that everyone was agreed, and that the wind was in the right direction, was confirmation of the course of action they took. Guidance is very tricky to discern, but we must stick close to the Lord, His Word and prayer, and not do anything until we are completely sure, and even then look for confirmation from the Lord.