

Studies on Practical Christian Living

Guidance

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2010

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Background

We are often faced with many choices in life. How often do we wish that the way forward was clear cut and easy? In these times we need to remember “where does my help come from?”. (Psalm 121:1).

Some of our other studies cover faith, hope and prayer. These are foundational to our understanding of guidance. As Christians our desire should be to serve and glorify God by following Scripture and loving God “with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30).

The Message

We find in Scripture some clear principles concerning the nature of guidance:

- **Sovereignty:** God is in control of the whole universe, He is sustaining it and we are to live our lives confidently under this huge canopy. He is working out His great purposes and we are individually enclosed by them. This is not something detached or impersonal; we can live life with confidence even when there are no details. “*But we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose.*” (Romans 8:28). God is even concerned with the sparrows. (Matthew 10:29).
- **Revelation:** God has spoken and revealed His character and His ways, and we have the written record in Scripture; there is also the moral sense within us through our creation (Romans 1:20). This tells us clearly how God wants us to live. It requires us knowing and using the Bible with care.
- **Salvation:** God is fulfilling particular and central purposes in Jesus and this fact sharpens particular requirements. (Acts 2:23, 20:27; Ephesians 1:9-11). Our will must have its central focus in Jesus’ character and teaching.
- **Grace:** God calls each of us to live under His grace; there is freedom and there is joy; there is chance and opportunity to be explored in harmony with all that God has already said and done. Most of what God has put in our hearts is there to be enjoyed. (1 Timothy 6:17).
- **Instruction:** God will speak to us very directly about things; it may happen in numerous ways:
 - a deep inner sense / peace.
 - a clear opportunity and peace.
 - a prophetic word.
- Important safeguards:
 - harmonising with Scripture what you know of God’s character.
 - sharing it with people you trust and praying about it together.
 - trying ‘doors’; gently seeing if things open to you.
 - keeping highly sensitive at all times for God to say, “No!” or “Not Yet!”.
- No safeguards!!
 - this is a high risk / high faith area; but God is not playing games with our lives!
 - it is a learning and maturing process.
 - putting the principles into play will save most of the problems.

First steps

As with all relationships it is a steady, developing, maturing experience. We need to learn to walk before we can run!

Questions

1. A young / new Christian in your church comes to you and says, "How do I learn to hear God?". What advice would you give them?
2. At what time should we seek guidance from the Lord?
3. In what ways has God specifically given you guidance?
4. In what other ways can God give us guidance?
5. How can we know we are walking in God's will?
6. How can we remain peaceful when the storm rages around us yet we know we are carrying out God's will?