

God, Which Direction Should I Go?

Psalm 25

Rest #4

Weekend of January 25-26, 2020



Introduction

This weekend I want to consider the idea, “God, which way is the right way to go?”

All of us have prayed that at some point, right? 'Which school should I go to? Should I go to grad school? Should I go out with him, or break up with her? Should I take the job?' Or may be even more serious questions like, “Is it right to separate from my husband in this season.”

All of us have been in a time when we didn't know what to do and asked God for help, right? How many are praying it right now? How

do we know what God wants us to do? A lot of the reason we can't rest is we are not sure how God wants us to go or what is the right or best thing to do.

How do we know what God wants in those situations? Does he give us some warm, serene feeling of peace when we think about the right decision? Does he give us a strange sign? **For many of us, we want God to be our Magic 8-ball.**

I want to acquaint you with a favorite Psalm because it is about how God guides us. Here's your big idea for the day: In this Psalm, and pretty much every place in the Bible: it is never about how God guides but whom God guides. Guidance is not as much something God gives to you as something he does for you. The question is are you the kind of person that he guides? Let's dive in...

Bible Study

Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will teach him in the way He should choose. He will dwell at ease, and his descendants will inherit the land....My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He will lead my feet from the net....The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Psalm 25: 12-13, 15, 17

If your thought is that maybe God only cares about the spiritual stuff—put that away. We see David trusting God's guidance over every inch of his life. David sums up his hope at the beginning and end of this psalm...

O my God, I trust in You; may I not be ashamed; may my enemies not triumph over me....Watch over my life, and deliver me! Let me not suffer shame, for I seek refuge in You. Psalm 25:2,20

There are a couple of really precious promises in this Psalm. Here's the first one...

Others Cannot Mess Up God's Will For Me: All throughout this psalm David talks about enemies who are trying to ruin his life. Some of you look back in your life and see how somebody really messed you up—a father, mother, a brother, an ex- spouse, a business

partner. David had those people, too, and he says, **“I trust that your promises are greater and more powerful than any of their evil intentions against me.”**

Belief in the sovereignty of God and his promise to turn all things for good enables you to forgive others. I know that some of you may be trapped in a cycle of bitterness because you can't shake how someone else seemingly ruined your life. Here is a challenge for you...

Later, get by yourself, and write out the name of that person that hurt you—your parents, your ex-spouse, your boss—and say, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.” **There is a second promise this Psalm helps me understand...**

My Past Mistakes Don't Permanently Disqualify Me From God's Will Being Accomplished In My Life Two times in this Psalm, David asks for forgiveness for past mistakes. Look at what he says in verse 11...

“For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.” Psalm 25:11

Not little iniquity, but big-league iniquity. And yet he still prays for God's guidance and perfect plan for his life. Here's what you need to see: David believes God's promises are greater even than his own mistakes.

It is true, sins and mistakes bring consequences into your life and they can be painful; but even those don't disqualify you from God's ultimate plan for your life. **Look at Jacob. In Genesis—he sins against Esau and there are many negative consequences. But estranged from his family, he meets Rachel the love of his life and from his relationship to her comes the line of the Messiah.**

Was this plan B? Did Jesus come out of the wrong plan? Was he somehow part of plan B? Now, does that mean that it's alright Jacob sinned? No, that sin affected him the rest of his life. Yet the Messiah still came from his line.

If you are willing to trust God, even your past sins can't disqualify you from God's ultimate destiny for you. In fact, in an amazing picture of God's grace, even through your sins God brings about his plan!

So, the question is, **“What do I have to do to experience this kind of guidance?”** Remember: The question in this psalm is not how God guides, but whom God guides. **What Kind of Person Receives The Guidance of God?** I think there are four characteristics identified in this Psalm. Here is the first...

God Guides Those Who Are Trained In His Ways: Look at this text...

“Make me to know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths.” Psalm 25:4

David is talking here about an inward familiarity with the ways of God that trains him how to act. It's how an athlete trains: an athlete can't be instructed on exactly how to respond in every situation—the defense is always changing. But they can be trained how to read situations and given the skills to respond accordingly. Look at how the Hebrew writer expresses this idea...

“Everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby. But solid food belongs to those who are mature, for those who through practice

have powers of discernment that are trained to distinguish good from evil.” Hebrews 5:13-14

“...**trained to distinguish good from evil,**” refers to things not outlined in Scripture. Being trained in the Scripture can still give you the instinct to know what God wants. This idea of “practice” described in this passage means being so saturated in Scripture and skilled in its application that it becomes second nature.

Here is an action step for you...You need to get saturated in God’s ways. So saturated that you think in patterns of Scripture. You won’t live out the word of God more than you know the word of God. Here is a second characteristic of those God guides...

God Guides Those Who Are Obedient To His Commands

“The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek He will teach His way. All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth, for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.” Psalm 25:9-10

Meek means you believe that God’s way is best. The opposite is pride, where you assume your way is better than God’s. When you disobey, and proudly assume your way is better, you cut yourself off from the guidance.

If you want God’s guidance, be obedient to the things God tells you to do. Some of you are right now saying, “God, what is your will in this decision?” but you have some area of disobedience! And God is pointing you back to that... go and deal with this and then you’ll experience my guidance.

Ultimately, you have to decide whom you trust with your future: waiting on God means doing things his way and trusting him to exalt you in his time. Disobedience means taking matters into your own hands, which leads to disgrace. Here is a third idea...

God Guides Those Who Are Willing To Trust In His Promises

“The counsel of the Lord is with those who fear him, and He will make His covenant known to them.” Psalm 25:14

God guides the person who trusts in God and walks in his ways. **You say, OK, trained in the ways of God, obedient to the commands of God, open to his counsel... “Practically, what does all that mean when a decision is actually upon me?”**

It means that you take advantage of every means of wisdom you have at your disposal: Scripture, your reason, counsel, ways the Spirit might be leading you, and then make the decision as best you can and trust that God is guiding you just like he promised he would! You have these words in Proverbs 3 which has become a life verse for me...

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust that God is guiding you! I’ve found it helpful to pray what I call the “sheep prayer.” Sheep are your spirit animal. There is some bad news and good news...Bad news-sheep are idiots. Good news, you’ve got a great shepherd. The good news: God tells me not to lean on my own

decision- making ability, but his willingness to guide me. God gave up on my decision-making ability back at the Garden of Eden. If he gets to where he needs to go, it won't be because of my competence as a sheep... So, he tells me to lean not "on my own understanding..."

A reminder of today's big idea... it is never about how God guides but whom God guides. Guidance in the Bible is not as much something God gives you as it is something he does for you. You become the kind of person God wants you to be and trust him with the rest. Here's the last idea...

God Guides Those Who Trust In The Grace Of God

"All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth, for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies." Psalm 25:10

What haunts many of us in our pursuit of God's will is that maybe God has mixed feelings toward us—maybe he is still holding some grudges against us because of sins or disappointments with us.

So, in any good blessing, you are waiting on the other shoe to drop. We assume God is saying to us, "Now, you don't really deserve to be that happy, do you... come on!" So, in any good you are waiting on the bad. How do we rest in the fact that God is really guiding our lives? Let's look at three practical applications...

Application

We rest that God is guiding us because of what God has done for us: The NT way of saying this is, **"There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."** **Romans 8:1**

That means you don't need to wait for the other shoe to drop! It dropped on Jesus. In Christ, I am blessed with every spiritual blessing... All the promises of God are yes... Every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights in whom there is no shadow of turning (which means no 2nd thoughts, no mixed feelings). He leads me and he protects me no matter what may come. Here's the second idea...

We rest even in the trials of life because we know God will never leave us or forsake us: Are you close to quitting? Please don't do it. Are you discouraged as a parent? Hang in there. Are you weary with doing good? Do just a little more. Are you pessimistic about your job? Roll up your sleeves and go at it again. No communication in your marriage? Give it one more shot. Can't resist temptation? Accept God's forgiveness and go one more round. Is your day framed with sorrow and disappointment? Are your tomorrows turning into nevers? Is hope a forgotten word? Remember, a finisher is not one with no wounds or weariness. Here's the last idea...

We rest because God is faithful: Here is a definition of faithfulness that helps us...

Faithfulness is obedience in the same direction.

As we obey even in life's hardest moments, we will see God prove himself faithful as you seek to be faithful. It was Mother Teresa who said: **God didn't call us to be successful, just faithful.** We walk through this world bruised and beaten. You are a fighter. The fighter, like our Master, is pierced and full of pain. He, like Paul, may even be bound and beaten. But he remains.