

## Seeking God's Guidance in a Spirit Filled Life

### Discussion Questions

1. When you're facing a decision that you're not sure what to do about, what's the first thing (or one of the first things) you do about it?
2. If someone tells you a riddle that you're having trouble figure out, which describes you better?
  - a. Tell me the answer now... please.
  - b. Let me try to think more first... then tell me the answer if I can't figure it out.
  - c. Wait, don't tell me the answer. I want to figure it out.
  - d. Don't bother telling me... I don't really care.

Explain your thinking behind your response. (Or give another response and explain it.)

### Introduction

Last week we discussed how God does not want us to worry about the future. We discovered that instead of worrying about tomorrow, God's will for us is to grow in a deeper knowledge and understanding of God. Today we will discuss how God guides us through the Bible and the role of extraordinary revelation.

### *Two Principles for God's Guidance*

1. **We cannot effectively respond to God's guidance when we are not living a Spirit filled life.** John MacArthur defines a "Spirit filled life is to live a Christ conscious life." A Spirit filled person continually thinks and lives the Bible in all aspects of life. Studying the Bible trains our hearts and minds to recognize God's guidance through the Holy Spirit in the Bible. This training leads us to a Spirit filled life.

"When we read the Bible, we know we are hearing from God. We are not only reading what God has inspired from the Spirit, but what He continues to say by the same Spirit. By contrast, hearing from God outside the Bible in these last days is always more tenuous, less clear, and less authoritative. We have no promise in Scripture that God will speak to us apart from the Spirit speaking through His Word." (DeYoung p. 68-69)

2. **God doesn't want us to expect the extraordinary as a way to guide our ordinary decisions.** The most observed extraordinary guidance is "supernatural gifting" like speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing. God reserved extraordinary guidance to lead people in a unique way for His purpose. God's extraordinary guidance through supernatural gifting does not contradict, is sought after and supersedes Biblical authority.

"...when we look carefully at the instances of special revelation in the book of Acts-visions, angels, audible voices, promptings, etc.-we notice one very important and consistent fact. The extraordinary means of guidance were not sought. I don't deny that God can still speak to us in direct, surprising ways. Of course, it must always be tested against Scripture, but I believe God can still give visions. The point is that these extraordinary means in the New Testament are just that-extra-ordinary." (DeYoung p. 70-71)

"God may guide us in these ways in rare instances, but we should not expect Him to. We have no record in the New Testament of anyone anxious to hear God tell him what to do." (DeYoung, p. 71)

## **How God Guides throughout the Bible**

How has God guided people through Scripture? Let's take a quick survey and see three instances of God's guidance.

### **1. Sometimes God guides us by obvious means. (Genesis 24)**

Here we have an instance where a person prayed for God to provide a specific sign to help him find a wife for Isaac. And God instantly provides the exact signs requested. Sometimes God may provide this, and you need a healthy dose of discernment to tell if such an event is a coincidence, a misleading of the devil, or a sign from God. And where would you get discernment? From immersing yourself in God's Word and knowing God.

### **2. Sometimes God guides us by closing doors. (Acts 16:6-10)**

Realize that who prevented Paul from going to Asia and the east to share the gospel? The Holy Spirit! Does it mean Paul didn't know the Holy Spirit very well? Or does it mean Paul was doing something wrong? No, it means God intervened in supernatural ways to redirect His servant Paul to where He wanted. If you are sincerely seeking the Lord with biblical wisdom and discernment, make your choice humbly and with prayer. Then trust in God to redirect you should He want to.

### **3. Most of the time, God leads us by allowing us to wrestle with decisions through Scripture, prayer, providential circumstances, and wise counsel from godly people. (Esther, Ruth, and 3 Jewish Boys in a Fiery Furnace)**

Esther had to wrestle with the will of God. (Esther 4:14)

Ruth had to learn that God is in control. (Ruth 4:14—ooh, the same chapter and verse as Esther. Hm... God's will?)

The 3 Jewish Young Men (Daniel's friends) had to make a decision trusting in God, not to save them from their danger but that they were obeying God's will. (Daniel 3:13... is there a pattern here?)

Did God love any of these individuals less? Did God not provide extraordinary or specific guidance because they were less spiritual? Did these individuals know with certainty what to do from God giving them a sneak peek into the future? The answer to all of these is "No."

### ***"Wait, wait, don't tell me..."***

When my kids tell me a riddle or puzzle, they're quick to want to give me the answer. I have to tell them, "Wait, wait, don't tell me! Let me figure it out!" There's the challenge of thinking about it, wrestling with different options, and trying to apply lessons I've learned in life. The same is true with Scripture and making decisions.

I believe God wants us to wrestle with understanding and applying His Scripture. I (Enoch) would go farther and say that God uses this very process of wrestling with understanding and applying Scripture to mature our faith and draw us closer to God.

So welcome the opportunity to wrestle with a decision. Embrace the situations where we are forced to become more humble and dependent on God. Relish the times we can seek out counsel from godly people and say, "I would like to ask your perspective on this..." Look to God to guide and grow you.