

“Where to Get Guidance”

Text: Psalm 119:105

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

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Pray!

Story of Astrology!

We continue our series on “God’s Will for My Life.” It’s amazing to see the ways people try to discover the future – tea leaves, fortune cookies, all kinds of different objects to discern the future.

- If you try to get guidance from the wrong source, then you’re going to base your life on incorrect data and you’ll get wrong results.

This morning I want us to look at the subject of “How Do You Get Guidance?”

I. WHAT ARE SOME UNRELIABLE SOURCES OF GUIDANCE?

1. Culture is an unreliable source of guidance.

- Romans 12:2 in the Phillips translation says *“Don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold.”* Exodus 20:3, *“Don’t follow the crowd in wrongdoing.”*
- **TV shows (immorality, violence, profanity)**

2. You can’t rely on circumstances.

- I’m amazed how many Christians allow circumstances to determine God’s will for their life. “It must not be God’s will that I go to church today; I woke up late.” “It must not be God’s will that I get to the airport because there was traffic today.” We take whatever happens and say, “It must have been God’s will.” Yet Scripture repeatedly points out those circumstances are often completely contrary to God’s will.
- 2 Samuel of the Old Testament. David is king of Israel. Everything is going great for him. He’s on top of the world. He’s out on his porch one day and looks down and there on the rooftop of somebody else’s house is a beautiful lady bathing. David thinks, “How convenient! I’m the king. It’s a spring day. Here’s a gorgeous woman. Her husband’s off fighting the battle. It must be God’s will!” Circumstances can often lie.
- That fact is Satan and people can manipulate circumstances.

3. You can’t trust counsel.

- There’s a lot of bad advice floating around these days. Books, magazines, television, counselors, computer websites... I saw a

headline of an article the other day that said, “Why Everybody Needs an Affair.” Now that’s great advice.

- Psalm 1:1, “*Blessed (blessed means happy) are those who do not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but who delight in the law of the Lord...*”
- He’s saying go ahead and get counsel but make sure your advice comes from the right source. It’s troubling that we have a lot of Christians paying non-Christians to tell them how to live their lives. They don’t have the spiritual resources and insights.

4. You can’t trust counterfeits.

- Cults, bad therapies, horoscopes, palm reading, scientology. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians, “*Satan masquerades as an angel of light.*” 1 John 4 says, “*Don’t just accept everything you hear, test the spirits. See if it’s really real.*”

5. It’s not your conscience.

- This is the most common mistake among Christians: Let your conscience be your guide. My conscience has told me to do a lot of things that were not God’s will.
- Cheating on their taxes. Having an affair. “It feels right.” And I’ve said, “But it couldn’t be right. Look what the Bible says.”
- Proverbs 3:5-6, “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart...*” then try to figure out what you’re supposed to do? No! “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding* (we need more than our conscience). *In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.*”

II. WHAT CAN I RELY ON?

A. It’s obvious. You can rely on God’s word. “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*” (Psalm 119:105)

1. God’s word gives guidance. It shines light where there is darkness. When I don’t know where to go, God’s word gives us guidance.

III. Three statements about God’s word.

1. God’s will is found in God’s word.

- Most of God’s will for your life is already revealed. It’s in the Bible. As we read God’s word, He speaks to us. David Allen says, “When you open your Bible, God opens His mouth. When you close your Bible, God closes His mouth.” God speaks through His word.
- The Bible directs us in four ways:
 1. It gives us direction through principles.
 2. It gives us direction through promises.
 3. It gives us direction through examples of people in the Bible.

4. It gives us direction through commands.

- One of those things, somehow, is going to give you some insight. But you've got to spend time in God's word. His will is found there.

2. God's will never contradicts God's word.

- Some people say, "I just had this impression I was supposed to do something. The Bible says don't do it, but I had this impression from God." Don't do it. God's will never contradicts God's word.
- God gives us a warning in Revelation 22:18 that we are not to add to the Bible or take away from the Bible. God says don't tamper with His word. Don't mess around with it. God's will never contradicts God's words.
- Couples have come to me and said, "We know that this is so right!" I say, "It couldn't be. Look at this Scripture."

3. God expects me to obey his word before he shows me His specific will.

- A. People come and say, "I want to know if I should change jobs." I think God is saying, "Are you doing what I've already told you to do? We always want to know God's will about other things but God says "Let's first start with what I've already said."
- B. The key to understanding God's purpose and plan for your life is to begin doing what you already know to be God's will. You start doing what's already there, and as you begin to do the revealed will of God you will begin to understand the concealed will of God.
- C. God says, "You start with what you already know to be God's will and then we can get into these other details." First you start by saying, "What does God already say is His will?" Are there some things in the Bible that God says, "You don't even have to pray about these. This is God's will." Seven times in the New Testament, the phrase, "This is God's will" is used.

1. It's God's will that I have eternal life. John 6:40,
"My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life."

- How do you have eternal life? Through being good? Being baptized? No. But through looking to the Son and believing in Him. If you haven't settled that, go ahead and settle it.

2. God's will is that I be filled with His Spirit.

Ephesians 5:17-18, *"Understand what the Lord's will is: Do not get drunk with wine instead be filled with the Spirit."*

- What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? When you became a Christian, whether you realized it or not, God put His spirit in your life, and He wants to control

your life. The Bible talks about that and calls that being filled with the Spirit.

- What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? You're under the influence and control of God. He's the Director of your life. God says don't get drunk, don't let anything else control or influence your life whether it's liquor or drugs or anything, but be controlled and influenced by God.

3. It's God's will that I live a pure, disciplined lifestyle.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, *"It is God's will that you should be holy, that you should avoid sexual immorality and learn to control your body in a way that is holy."*
- If everybody obeyed that we wouldn't have an AIDS epidemic. Live a pure, disciplined lifestyle. Is God saying avoid sex? No. Who do you think thought it up? God did. Sex is not dirty. It's holy. You may not go to bed with anybody but your spouse, but would you read about it in a book or go to a movie that condones and glorifies a lifestyle that God says is not His will?
- God says He wants us to live a pure life and a disciplined life.

4. It's God's will that I maintain an attitude of gratitude.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17, *"Be joyful always. Pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you."*
- You want to know God's will? Simple. Pray about everything. Be joyful all the time. *"In everything give thanks."* Not, *"for everything give thanks."* It says *"in everything give thanks."* Why? Why should I be thankful in everything?
 - a. The problem is an opportunity to grow.
 - b. The problem is an opportunity for God to show His power. Andre Crouch says, "If I never had a problem, I'd never know that God could solve them."
 - c. Because God can even use the bad things in my life to teach me character and gratitude and I can grow if I respond in the right way.

5. It is God's will that I be a law abiding citizen.

- 1 Peter 2 13-16, *"Submit your selves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men [government, civil government, federal government, traffic laws] for it is God's will that by doing good you silence the ignorant talk of foolish men."*
- God says it's God's will for you to be a good citizen. Keep the law of the land. Be an example. What if you

don't agree with the law? Change it. But you abide by it until it's changed.

6. It is God's will that I bring others to Christ.

- It is God's will that I bring other people to Christ, that I share my faith, that I tell others about what He's done for me, that I help other people know the good news, to come to Jesus Christ and make a commitment.
- 2 Peter 3:9, *"The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that everyone come to repentance."*
- God doesn't want anybody to die without Christ. God is not willing that anybody go to hell. That's not His will. He wants them to all know Him. He wants His word shared.
- For many people, you're the only Christian they're ever going to know. It's God's will that you share. If I don't tell them, who will?

7. It is God's will that I commit myself to God and other believers.

- Be committed not just to God but also to a group of other Christians, to a family of believers, to a church.
- Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8:5, *"They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will."*
- You need two things to grow in life: God's word, which is guidelines, and God's people, which is support. You need to be committed to some other Christians who will encourage you and inspire you and pray for you and help you and lift you up when you're down and point out a blind spot when you have one.
- That's why you need to be in a small group. Why? Because it's God's will that you be committed to Him and to other Christians. God wants it.

Pray!

Heavenly Father, I know that You're not playing games with us, that You really do want us to know Your will, that it's not a matter of You hiding it from us and we try to find it. But we know that You do want us to know Your will. We do know that you expect us to obey your word before You can show us any more. Help us to settle the issues that already are obvious in our lives, so that we may then come to You and ask for guidance in areas that aren't so clear. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.