

“God’s Guidelines for Decisions”
Text: Psalm 32:8 and other passages

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Ask the question – **“What are some areas where we might ask God what His will is?”**

How does God guide us in all the decisions and choices that are before us?

- The Bible says that God gives us the Holy Spirit to be our guide. He is with us. He knows where you’ve been. He knows where you’re going.
- More than guidance, God wants to give you a Guide.

Read Psalm 32:8, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go and I will counsel you and watch over you.”

PRAY!

The question is, how does the Holy Spirit guide? Sure, there are times when the Holy Spirit does it supernaturally (vision or dream). But most of the time the Holy Spirit guides in quite normal ways.

This morning we’re going to look at Nine Guidelines for Guidance. This is kind of a summary message.

- These steps are not a formula. They’re just some steps for guidance, some guidelines.

1. RELAX

- A. One of our most common mistakes in trying to find God’s will is we get too anxious, too uptight. We’re worried about it. “Am I in the will of God? Have I missed it?” Many people think God’s will is a tightrope and if you make one misjudgment, one mistake, one false move, you’re done for. That’s it!
- B. When you get uptight, God can’t get through to you and you can’t think clearly.
- C. God’s will is not your responsibility; it’s God’s. It’s God’s responsibility to *reveal* it to you. It’s your responsibility to *respond* to it.
 1. Father to child illustration.
 - I am your father and I have a will for your life.
 - If you follow my will, it will please me, will add purpose and meaning to your life. If you’ll just follow my will.”

- My child says, “O great almighty father, I am ready to do your will. I am at your beck and call. Tell me what your will is. Father, tell me what you want me to do.
 - Then I say, “Whoa, it’s not that easy. You have to figure it out on your own. I’m not going to tell you. That would make it too easy. I want you to do it and if you do it, it will work out great, but I’m not going to tell you what it is.”
2. A lot of people think God acts that way and He doesn’t. God wants us to know His will. He wants to guide us. It’s His responsibility to teach us His will.
- D. Proverbs 3:5, “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart.*” God is saying, Don’t worry. It’s My responsibility to reveal My will. You just trust.
- E. So, Relax. If you’re uptight, dead tired, now is **not** the time to make a major decision. Wait until you’re relaxed.

2. BE WILLING TO OBEY IN ADVANCE.

- A. You choose to do God’s will even before you know it; a prior attitude of commitment.
- B. David says in Psalms 40:8, “*To do your will, O my God, is my desire.*” He says “I want to do it,” in advance, even before I know it. Jesus said, “*Anyone who chooses to do my will, will know it.*” You choose to do it in advance.
- C. This is where 90% of the problem comes in knowing God’s will. There’s the battle between God’s will and my will.
- We say to God, “God, You show Your will to me, then I’ll decide if I want to do it.” God’s will is not for the curiosity seekers.
 - If you say to God, “God, I want to follow You 100%. I’m willing to go anywhere, do anything.” God will test you. He will test you to see if you mean business.
 - Or you can say honestly, “God, I don’t know if I want to do it or not. But I’m willing to be made willing.” Relax. Be willing to obey in advance.

3. MAKE SURE YOU’RE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

- A. 1 John 1:9 says you have to have a clear conscience in order to have fellowship with God. Confess your sins.
- B. Romans 12 talks about dedicating yourself totally to God first. You establish Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life first. Then, you will know what is the good, acceptable and pleasing will of God.
- C. You get yourself in God’s will and then He can show you the specifics. Get in fellowship with God.

4. SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

- A. God's will is found in God's Word. Read the Bible. God's will never contradicts God's Word. Study the Scriptures. Any major decision in your life is an excellent reason to do a Bible study.
- B. Get a concordance, get a Bible and do a systematic study on the topic you want to study.
- I wouldn't **get married** without first studying all the Scriptures in the Bible about marriage.
 - I wouldn't **make a move** without looking first at what the Bible has to say about work.
 - Are you under **stress**? Study what the Bible has to say about stress.
 - Look for the **principles**, the **commands**, the **examples**, the **promises**.
 - **Don't** look for the **name** of the person you're to **marry**, but the **type of marriage** you're to have.
- C. Don't do a cafeteria style approach where you dip and skip.
- Like the guy who opened his Bible, praying, "What's Your will today?" He put his finger down on "*Judas went out and killed himself.*" That couldn't be right, he thought and tried a second time, "*Go thou and do likewise.*" That couldn't be right! A third time: "*What thou doest, do quickly.*"
 - That's the haphazard approach to the Word of God. Study it systematically.

5. PRAY FOR GOD'S WISDOM.

- A. Ask God for wisdom. James 1:5, "*If anyone lacks wisdom...*" worry about it? "*If anyone lacks wisdom let him ask.*" ... "*You have not because you ask not.*"
- B. Over and over it says to ask for wisdom. Pray. How many of you spend five minutes every day saying, 'God, what do You want me to do?' We pray; we ask God. Often in prayer, God will plant an idea in your mind and show you His will.

6. GET THE FACTS.

- A. Check it out. Get the whole story. Investigate. You don't make a decision on faulty knowledge. God gave you a lot of wisdom, a lot of guidance, and He gave you a brain. He expects you to check it out.
- B. Proverbs 23:23, "*Get the facts at any price, and hold on tightly to all the good sense you can get.*" How many of you have learned from experience that things are not always the way they appear to be? You've got to get the facts.
- I'm amazed at how many people get married before they ever even know the person they're going to marry.
 - Or how many people accept a job offer before they ever check out what that job offer includes?

- Or how many people make the move to some other town just based on the feeling or they want to? People say, “I just kind of go with the flow. I just let the spirit lead.”
- C. **Get the facts.** That’s the spiritual thing to do. Find out what’s really happening.
- Jesus said, “*No man builds a tower without first counting the cost. No man goes to war without first counting his army to see if he has enough soldiers.*” You check it out.
 - Checking out PBPC.
- D. Getting the facts involves a realistic evaluation of your own abilities. Can I do this? Am I gifted in this area?
- E. Proverbs 24:6, “*In the multitude of counselors, there is safety.*”
- Get advice.** Make sure you get it from the right kind of people – godly, mature Christians. They ought to be neutral, people who neither profit nor lose by your decision. Also, talk to people who have been where you want to be.

7. CONSIDER YOUR DESIRES.

- A. Ask yourself, “What do I really want?” And “Why do I want it?” That’s even more important. Psalm 37:4, “*Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.*” Not just your needs – your desires.
- B. Psalm 84:11, “*No good things will he withhold from those who walk uprightly.*” God wants to bless you. God often uses our desires.
- Young American Showcase
- C. God can use your desires to direct you. He can even put desires in your heart.

8. IN FAITH MAKE A DECISION.

- A. I think this is one we get a little bit hung up with. Proverbs 16:9, “*We should make our plans, counting on God to direct us.*” The Bible says it’s okay to make plans. Sometimes there comes a point when you have to step out in faith. You have to move ahead, go for it. When you don’t have all the answers, when you’re not really sure, you have to step out in faith and make the move.
- B. Let me give you some principles in this area:
- **God can’t steer a parked car.** When it’s parked, the steering wheel is locked. There’s no guidance to it. You have to get the thing going before God can guide it.
 - **Do what you already know to be the will of God.** Start serving Him, start living for Him. Find a place where you can serve.
 - **God takes even our mistakes and weaves them into His plan.** God takes into account your humanity. I believe the Bible teaches that God would rather have you make a mistake in faith than sit and do nothing in doubt. At least you

made the effort and you moved in faith. You have to make a decision. You have to go for it sometime.

- **God not only guides us by steps but God also guides us by stops.** Sometimes He slams the door.
- Paul's example from Acts 16 (Mysia, Bithynia, Troas). Keep going ahead and ask the Lord to close doors if you're going the wrong way.

9. LET CIRCUMSTANCES CONFIRM GOD'S WILL.

A. I'm not talking about let circumstances reveal God's will but let them confirm God's will. I'm talking about after the fact, after you've made the decision, after you've stepped out in faith.

- Proverbs 16:1, "*We can make our plans but the final outcome is in God's hands.*" We make our plans, but we know that the ultimate result is up to God.

B. One of the things God does is He uses circumstances to confirm His will after we've made the decision. You should never let circumstances be the sole criteria for making any decision in life. Why? You're reacting to everybody else's circumstances instead of you controlling the situation or letting the Holy Spirit control it.

- Moving to Oakland – Call package, house rental, time table, events
- **Principle: God's timing is usually very different from our deadlines. His timing is perfect.**

Please join me in prayer:

I invite you to open your heart to Jesus Christ in a way you've never done before. Begin living in Him in communion minute by minute. Would you say, **"Holy Spirit, would you come into my life? Jesus Christ, put Your Spirit in my life and direct me starting this afternoon, tomorrow morning, all next week. Would You teach me to live by faith?"**

"Heavenly Father, I thank you that You love us, that You give us guidance through Your Word but even more than that, You've given us a personal guide through Your Holy Spirit. Help us to spend time with You every day, talking with You in prayer, listening to You in silence, listening to You as we read the Bible that we might understand Your will for our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."