

In Search of Guidance

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Twenty-Nine)

Acts 21

“Tho devils be as many in Worms as tiles on the roofs, yet thither will I go! I shall not flee, still less recant.” (Martin Luther)

A. Where do you get Paul’s kind of confidence in God’s guidance?

FIRST. RESOLVE TO DO GOD’S WILL

A. The decision to follow God’s will comes first - even before we know His will

“...mercilessly resolve to do God’s will” (John Ortberg)

1. Resolve to be obedient; resolve to pursue holiness; re-resolve again and again

“Divine guidance only makes sense when set in the context of a larger life of the right kind” (Dallas Willard)

2. Seeking God’s guidance only makes sense if we’re actually going to do it

B. Sadly, most people don’t really want God’s guidance

SECOND. BE DEVOTED TO GOD’S WORD

A. Being devoted to the Word defined the early church

B. We need to be in the Word

1. We need to read it; memorize it, pray about it, discuss it, practice it

2. It must be a part of our thinking, understanding, decisions, and actions

“Do not let this book depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it.” (Joshua 1:8)

“I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Ps. 119:11)

THIRD. BE ATTENTIVE. BE ACTIVE

A. Be alert to your circumstances, what you’re thinking and your desires

1. God often speaks through circumstances, our thought processes, our desires

2. God is not limited to audible sounds, physical gestures or written symbols

B. Seeking God’s guidance is not a passive process but an active exercise

FOURTH. SPEAK TO GOD SPECIFICALLY; SPEAK CONSTANTLY

A. Prayer is the second mark of the early Church

“They all joined together constantly in prayer...” (Acts 1:14)

B. If we want God’s guidance, we must cultivate the habit of talking with God

FIFTH. LISTEN TO GOD

A. Prayer - our conversation with God - is meant to be a dialogue

B. How do we listen to God?

“During the night, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia standing and begging him to ‘Come over and help us.’” (Acts 16:9)

“The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, ‘Take courage.’” (Acts 23:11)

“Last night the angel of the Lord stood beside me and said, ‘Do not be afraid.’” (Acts 27:23)

1. Where do you hear God best?

2. Find your sweet spot. Deepen your relationship. Practice your listening

SIXTH. LEARN TO DECIDE

A. What if you don’t get a clear sense of God’s guidance?

1. Answer: Don’t force it. Don’t manufacture a false sense of certainty

2. Answer: Choose what seems best. Sometimes God says *“You choose”*

“Don’t be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...his perfect, holy, and acceptable will.” (Romans 12:2)

“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.” (Colossians 1:28)

“Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” (Ephesians 4:15)

B. God’s ultimate goal is for us to become a mature follower

1. Every time we make a well-discerned decision, we mature a little bit

2. God created us as a person in his image

3. God gives us the opportunity to follow him and become more Christ-like

C. Are you able to say *“Here I stand!”* and *“The will of the Lord be done!”*