



HOW DOES GOD GUIDE US?

The Alpha Course week 6

We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (*Ephesians 2:10*)

Why involve God in the decisions we make?

- God promises to guide us
 - I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. (*Psalms 32:8*)
 - My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. (*John 10:3-4, 27*)
- God has a good plan for our lives
 - For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (*Jeremiah 29:11*)
 - Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. (*Romans 12:2*)
 - The thief comes only to steal and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full ... just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep. (*John 10:10, 15*)

How does God guide us?

1. COMMANDING SCRIPTURE

- General will - instruction for marriage, work, money, children, elderly relatives (*2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105, 130-133*)
- Primary calling - to love God, love others, to become like Jesus

2. COMPELLING SPIRIT

- God speaks as you pray (*Acts 13:1-3*)
- Strong desire to do something
 - "It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose." (*Philippians 2:13*)
- Sometimes He guides in more unusual ways
 - Prophecy, for example, Agabus (*Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11*)
 - Dreams (*Matthew 1:20*), visions and pictures (*Acts 16:10*)

- Angels (*Genesis 18; Matthew 2:19; Acts 12:7*)
- Audible voice (*1 Samuel 3:4-14*)

3. COUNSEL OF THE SAINTS

- "... the wise listen to advice." (*Proverbs 12:15*)
- "Plans are established by seeking advice." (*Proverbs 20:18*)
- Need for testing (*1 John 4:1*) – Is it in line with the Bible?
 - Is it loving? (*1 John 4:16*)
 - Is it strengthening, encouraging and comforting? (*1 Corinthians 14:3*)
 - Does it bring the peace of God? (*Colossians 3:15*)

Ultimately, we are responsible for our decisions, but it is a blessing to have others to talk to about the decisions we are making.

4. COMMON SENSE

- "Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this." (*2 Timothy 2:7*)
- **"God's promises of guidance were not, given to save us the problem of thinking" - John Stott**

5. CIRCUMSTANTIAL SIGNS

- "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (*Romans 8:28*)
- "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." (*Proverbs 16:9; Psalm 37:5*)
- Sometimes God closes doors (*Acts 16:7*)
- Sometimes God opens doors (*1 Corinthians 16:9*)
- Sometimes we need to persevere despite the circumstances and trust God
- Be patient!
- We all make mistakes - God forgives (*Joel 2:25*)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS

1. Over the last few weeks, have you had a sense that God might be guiding you? How has he been doing so?
2. How do you feel about the idea of God having a plan for your life?
3. What do you need God's guidance for at this time?
4. Take some time to discuss the five 'CSs'. How might God be using them to guide you and help you?

WHY DOES DAVID TRUST GOD TO GUIDE HIM?

The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.

I will advise you and watch over you.

Do not be like a senseless horse or mule
that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."

Many sorrows come to the wicked,
but unailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord.

Psalm 32:8-10

Israel's King David certainly had his ups and downs. For much of his life, especially before becoming king, he was in great danger and at times his life hung in the balance. Yet despite all this, he trusted in God to protect and watch over him, to guide him and lead him forward. He wrote about this in many of his Psalms, a great example being these verses from Psalm 32.

David certainly wasn't perfect – you can read some pretty horrific stories of his life in the Old Testament. Yet he held firm to his solid trust in God, and (except for some lapses) listened to God's guidance. This came through a variety of ways, but at the heart was David's desire to know God's will and his direction. This so often drove his decisions, even when doing his own thing would have been easier.

So why did David trust God to guide him? He knew that God's guidance always leads to the very best for us and those around us. For David, it was integral to his worship; true worship leads to obedience, and obedience means doing what God tells us. Of course, integral to this is being guided by him.

So like David, shouldn't we let God guide us and then do what he says?

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Ephesians 2:10

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him and have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28



Watch this week's video at

<https://vimeo.com/250771931>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. David is a great example in the Bible of being guided by God. In what ways did he hear God speak to him? How did he test it?
2. Have you known God guide you? How did he do so, and what did you do as a result?
3. What might stop us hearing God guide us? How can we help one another hear – and put into practice – what God is saying to us?
4. Has your understanding of how God guides us changed following this week's Alpha? If so how, and what impact might this have on your life?

O Lord, You are the light that guides my feet.

You are the map that gives me direction.

You are the peace that makes me strong.

You are the leader whom I faithfully follow.

May your light illuminate my life and your guidance bring direction.

May I find inspiration in your word and

peace in my heart as I follow you. Amen.

You might like to read.... *Chasing the Dragon* by Jackie Pullinger

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