

# BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus and Thompsons Rds., LWR TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3107 : 03 9850 9633

**SERIES : "Resources For Life's Crises"**

## **STUDY 11 : Sunday, July 25, 2004 : "Seeking God's Guidance"**

Notes by Rev. Gary Lockyer

People everywhere want guidance! - from consulting a manual to scanning the horoscopes to find answers to pressing problems or to relieve the worry of the unknown future! God has promised to guide us :

***"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.  
I will counsel you and watch over you."*** ... Psalm 32 : 8

No matter what the circumstances, we want to know and to do God's will, but in the midst of a full-blown crisis a subtle twist in our focus can make us susceptible to following anything and believing anything so long as it holds the faintest prospect of relief.

Under pressure, in a crisis, we can lose sight of living for God's GLORY as we are overwhelmed with our NEEDS. Under this pressure, with our thinking in a spin, we can too easily baptise any course of action as "God's will" - not only those that go against common sense but even the clear statements of God's Word.

This Study gives us a useful handle on "Guidance" in general plus some key things to keep in mind should the pressure build .....

### **A. SOMETHING BETTER THAN GUIDANCE**

Caught up in a crisis, lost in anxiety and pain, we want above all else that the crisis should end. Either by God's direct intervention or by us knowing what to do, what to choose, and which direction to go. But we may not need to rush into instant action. Instead we may need to .....

- 1. RELAX** : a common reaction, on reflection, after the crisis - "God WAS at work!"
- 2. RELY** : if we do need to make a decision, TRUST that God will either enable us to make a workable one, or be at work himself folding our less than "perfect" choice into the fabric of our lives for our good. *"In all things God works for the good of those who love him."* (Rom8:28) ... even in our poor choices under stress.
- 3. REALISE** : that God first offers his PRESENCE. Ps23:4 does not say ***"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because you will send me an email and a road map"*** Instead it says " ..... you are with me."

These three points remind us that while we may seek guidance,  
God offers something better : himself as a GUIDE - with us and at work in us and for us.

### **B. GUIDANCE : THE MAIN FOCUS**

For us the focus of wanting guidance is often , "Where should I live?" "What job should I take?" Who should I marry?" and "How should I proceed?" These questions are all EXTERNAL to who we are.

God is primarily concerned with INTERNAL change.... not so much with "what we do", but with "who we are." His expressed will for us all is to be ***"conformed to the image of his Son."***  
(Rom8:29-30; see also Eph1:4, 11-12)

If we cultivate the growth of a "Christ-like character." then "Christ-like actions & decisions, in step with God's will for us, will follow. So ... work on what we know God wants of us and leave the secondary things to work themselves out in God's good time."

### **C. GUIDANCE : THE MAIN TOOL**

Didn't God speak to people in visions and dreams? He did, and he may still do! But notice that these usually were given to people who were either ....

1. set in their ways and stubborn (Peter on the rooftop, Paul on the road to Damascus), or,
2. called to an extraordinary role : (Eg. Mary, on being told she was pregnant)

But available to all is the will of God revealed through the SCRIPTURES.

**"How can a person keep their way pure? By living according to your Word" Ps119:9**

See also 2Tim3:16-17 - *"teaching, rebuking, correcting, training ....so that God's person may be thoroughly equipped..."*

God does not usually guide us in spectacular, miraculous ways. He wants us to know his mind and understand his heart; to be so acquainted with his outlook and priorities through a knowledge of his Word that, sensitive to the Holy Spirit, we are more able to clearly discern his leading.

Knowing God's Word leads to STABILITY (Psalm 1) and MATURITY (Eph4:11-16)

..... an ideal basis for all decision making.

## D. GUIDANCE : SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK

A course of action presents itself. Submit it to these four questions before embarking on it.

- "How does it line up with God's Word?"
- "Does it assist my growth as a Christian?"
- "Will it enhance my witness as a Christian?"
- "Is this decision in line with how I believe God is leading me?"

Even if not made in the context of an existing recognised crisis, a choice made without listening to the answers to the above questions may well precipitate its own considerable crisis .... a crisis that obedience to God would have avoided.

**Note** that the questions descend from the top - the more OBJECTIVE must be answered first!

## E. GUIDANCE : SOME OTHER FACTORS

1. What are my GIFTS? : (How has God built and equipped me)
2. What are my CHOICES? (What are my opportunities, circumstances etc)
3. What wise COUNSEL have I sought. (trusted Christian friends.)

A CAUTION! Beware of thinking that God's will for your life is "narrow" or "confined"

eg .... only one marriage partner in the world! What if I don't recognise him / her?

only one profession / career for me! What if I make the wrong choices in my VCE?

only one call into a ministry! What if I miss it?

Rather, in his Grace, God gives multiple choices and opportunities Even if we make the wrong choices, well outside his will for us - or for any Christian - he is a "Redeeming God" who, in his Grace, weaves even them into the pattern of our life for our good and his glory

1. To know Jesus as Saviour and Lord
  2. To have his image "grow" in my life - so that his characteristics ("the fruit of the Spirit") are increasingly evident in my personality

### Proverbs 3:5-6

*"Trust in the Lord with all you heart  
(The Main Priority),*

*and lean not on your own understanding  
(The Main Danger);*

*in all your ways acknowledge him  
(The Main Focus) ,*

*and he will make your paths straight."  
(A Clear Direction, that honours God & us!)*

