

“Guide, Guard, and Direct Us”

(Adapted by Paul R. Blake from an outline by Mark Copeland)

Introduction:

- A. Acts 16:6-10
 - 1. The Lord’s guidance of Paul was evident throughout his work
 - a. Acts 13:2-4
 - 2. This is not typical of how God directs His people
- B. How does God guide and direct His people today?

I. GOD'S GUIDANCE OF PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS

- A. Forbidden to preach in Asia by the Holy Spirit - Acts 16:6
 - 1. Paul later spent over two years in Ephesus - Acts 19:1, 10
 - 2. Perhaps the Spirit forbade them at this time, knowing that they would have the opportunity to preach in Asia later
- B. Not permitted to go into Bithynia by the Spirit - Acts 16:7
 - 1. Peter later wrote to Christians in Bithynia - 1Peter 1:1
 - 2. Perhaps the Spirit did not permit them at this time, knowing that others would minister to Bithynia in the future
- C. Arrived at Troas after bypassing Mysia - Acts 16:8
 - 1. Paul has a vision of a man of Macedonia - Acts 16:9
 - 2. They drew conclusions about the meaning of the vision: the Lord wanted them to preach the gospel in Macedonia - Acts 16:10
 - 3. It is at this point that we conclude that Luke is with them, as he consistently uses personal pronouns

II. UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GUIDANCE TODAY

- A. God's proclaimed will - 1Thes. 5:18; 1Peter 2:15
 - 1. Made manifest by God - Heb. 1:1-2; John 16:12-13; 1Cor. 14:36-37
 - 2. We must do His will in order to be saved - Matt. 7:21
 - 3. God reveals His will in the scriptures - 2Tim. 3:16-17
- B. God's providential will - Rom. 1:10, 15:32
 - 1. That is why we pray about our plans - James 4:13, 15
- C. God's permissive will
 - 1. God allows things to happen that are not necessarily in keeping with His desired will
 - a. Free will enables people to choose to sin and hurt other people
 - b. God is not pleased and will render judgment - Acts 17:30-31
 - c. He is able to fulfill His own will, in spite of this - Isa. 10:5-7
 - 3. God permits people to do things that are matters of Divine indifference
 - a. Rom. 14:5-6
 - b. Not all choices please God, nor are demanded by God; so, how do we know we are cooperating with the will of God?

III. COOPERATING WITH GOD'S GUIDANCE TODAY

- A. Focus on the proclaimed will of God
 - 1. 2Tim. 2:15; 1Tim. 4:16
 - 2. We will not be ignorant of what we must know and do
 - 3. We will avoid choices that are contrary to God's will
- B. Obtain advice from other dedicated Christians
 - 1. Prov. 11:14, 12:15
- C. Pray diligently for the ability to discern wisely - James 1:5
 - 1. Wisdom is that spiritual insight that enables us to evaluate situations clearly and helps us to utilize the options and abilities we have
- D. Commit your way to the Lord
 - 1. Whatever you do, do it for the Lord's sake - Psalm 37:5-6, 23-24
 - 2. Make your plans subject to God's will, both proclaimed and providential
 - 3. Ask God to close the door on your choice if it is His will
 - 4. If He closes the door on your choice, be content to look for alternatives
- E. Things to remember
 - 1. God is able to accomplish His will regardless of whether we cooperate or not, whether we obey or disobey, whether we do nothing or do our own thing.
 - a. However, it is in our best interests to be guided and directed by the will of God
 - b. Esther 4:14 - Do the right thing regardless of the consequences
 - 2. A choice may not be between good & bad, but between good & better
 - 3. God can use us in many different ways; be prepared and humble enough to serve Him in whatever task is at hand
 - 4. If God has given you time to choose, use that time to pray, grow, and gain wisdom
 - 5. Whatever your hands find to do in current circumstances, do it with all of your might - Ecc. 9:10

Conclusion:

- A. Our goal should be to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"
 - 1. Col. 4:12
- B. Pray for guidance and direction from the will of God. Jesus did.
 - 1. Matt. 6:10; 26:39