

“Guide, Guard, and Direct Us”

Acts 16:6-10

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- “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. 8 So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us. 10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.”

“Guide, Guard, and Direct Us”

- The Lord’s guidance of Paul was evident throughout his work
 - Acts 13:2-4 - “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”

“Guide, Guard, and Direct Us”

- This is not typical of how God directs His people
- How does God guide and direct His people today?

God's Guidance Of Paul And His Companions

- Forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia
 - Acts 16:6 - “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.”

God's Guidance Of Paul And His Companions

- Paul later spent over two years in Ephesus
 - Acts 19:1, 10 - “And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus... 10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”
- Perhaps the Spirit forbade them at this time, knowing that they would have the opportunity to preach in Asia later

God's Guidance Of Paul And His Companions

- Not permitted to go into Bithynia by the Spirit
 - Acts 16:7 - “After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.”
- Peter later wrote to Christians in Bithynia
 - 1Peter 1:1 - “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia”
- Perhaps the Spirit did not permit them at this time, knowing that others would minister to Bithynia in the future

God's Guidance Of Paul And His Companions

- Arrived at Troas after bypassing Mysia
 - Acts 16:8 - “So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.”
- Paul has a vision of a man of Macedonia
 - Acts 16:9 - “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

God's Guidance Of Paul And His Companions

- They drew conclusions about the meaning of the vision: the Lord wanted them to preach the gospel in Macedonia
 - Acts 16:10 - “Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.”

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- God's proclaimed will
 - 1Thes. 5:18 - “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
 - 1Peter 2:15 - “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men”

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- Made manifest by God
 - Heb. 1:1-2 - “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...”
 - John 16:12-13 - “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- 1Cor. 14:36-37 - “Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? 37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.”

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- We must do His will in order to be saved
 - Matt. 7:21 - “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
- God reveals His will in the scriptures
 - 2Tim. 3:16-17 - “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- God's providential will
 - Rom. 1:10 - “Making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.”
 - Rom. 15:32 - “That I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.”

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- That is why we pray about our plans
 - James 4:13, 15 - “Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit... 15 Instead you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that”

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- God's permissive will
 - God allows things to happen that are not necessarily in keeping with His desired will
 - Free will enables people to choose to sin and hurt other people
 - God is not pleased and will render judgment
 - Acts 17:30-31
 - He is able to fulfill His own will in spite of this
 - Isa. 10:5-7

Understanding God's Guidance Today

- God permits people to do things that are matters of Divine indifference
 - Rom. 14:5-6
- Not all choices please God, nor are demanded by God; so, how do we know we are cooperating with the will of God?

Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- Focus on the proclaimed will of God
 - 2Tim. 2:15 - “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
 - 1Tim. 4:16 - “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”
- We will not be ignorant of what we must know and do
- We will avoid choices that are contrary to God's will

Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- Obtain advice from other dedicated Christians
 - Prov. 11:14 - “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”
 - Prov. 12:15 - “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.”

Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- Pray diligently for the ability to discern wisely
 - James 1:5 - “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”
 - Wisdom is that spiritual insight that enables us to evaluate situations clearly and helps us to utilize the options and abilities we have

Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- Commit your way to the Lord
 - Psalm 37:5-6, 23-24 - “Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday... 23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.”

Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- Make your plans subject to God's will, both proclaimed and providential
- Ask God to close the door on your choice if it is His will
- If He closes the door on your choice, be content to look for alternatives

Things To Remember About Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- God is able to accomplish His will regardless of whether we cooperate or rebel, whether we obey or disobey, whether we do nothing or do our own thing.
- However, it is in our best interest to be guided and directed by the will of God
 - Esther 4:14 - “For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”
- Do the right thing regardless of the consequences

Things To Remember About Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- A choice may not be between good and bad, but between good and better
- God can use us in many different ways; be prepared and humble enough to serve Him in whatever task is at hand
- If God has given you time to choose, use that time to pray, grow, and gain wisdom
- Ecc. 9:10 - “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might”

Things To Remember About Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- Our goal should be to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God
 - Col. 4:12 - “Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

Things To Remember About Cooperating With God's Guidance Today

- Pray for guidance and direction from the will of God. Jesus did.
 - Matt. 6:10 - “Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.”
 - Matt. 26:39 - “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”