

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Rev. Dr. Will Butler, Pastor & Instructor

Queens Chapel

7410 Muirkirk Road * Beltsville, MD 20705

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Lesson 4 **"God Guides Me"** **11 October 2023**

"He guides me along the right paths
for His name's sake"

Psalm 23:3b (NIV)

Read and meditate on **Psalm 23b** "He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake" a few times. Pay attention to the words as you read it a few times.

Q = What word or words catch your attention and why?

Share with someone what word(s) you selected and your reason(s) why you selected the word(s). Explain what was going through your mind when the word(s) caught your attention.

If David was writing this Psalm today, he might say:

- God Keeps me on track
- God doesn't just feed me; He leads me
- God doesn't just correct me; He directs me

If David is so sure and confident that God leads, directs, and keeps him on track, then...

Q = Why does it seem so hard to figure out what God wants me to do?

Q = Why does God's will seem so mysterious?

Q = Is God playing hide-and-go-seek with me?

Q = Does God enjoy confusing me?

Absolutely not! That's not God's character.

God has given us a roadmap: The Bible. God has given us a compass, our conscience, God has also given us a personal guidance counselor, the Holy Spirit.

- God never intended for us to figure out the steps of our journey without God's help.
- God is responsible for how we discover our mission in life and how we succeed at our mission in life?
- God uses the Holy Spirit in many ways for us to succeed in life.

Romans 8:14 (Contemporary English Version CEV)

"Only those people who are led by God's Spirit are his children."

- God through the Holy Spirit will guide us but we must be aware that our journey will always include starts and stops along the way.
- There will be some things we'll need to stop doing and some things we need to start doing.

The Stop-Doing List

The following is a list of three (3) things we must stop doing if God is going to lead and direct us:

1. Stop following a culture that doesn't follow God.

- One reason we may not know which direction God wants to lead us in is that we may be too adapted to also today's culture.
- The problem is we can't think like the world and expect to think like God

Q = Are we watching movies, reading materials, or listening to other sources more than we're listening or reading God's Word?

Romans 12:2 (NLT)

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

1 John 2:15 (NIV)

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them."

Questions to think about:

Q = What cultural norms have seeped into your life? How do they contradict God's ways?

- This was Israel's biggest problem for thousands of years. They wanted to be like other nations.
- Yet, God gave them all kinds of moral, civil, and ceremonial laws to make them different on purpose

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NIV)

"9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

2. Stop following friends who aren't led by God.

There's plenty of bad advice floating around and too often we feel pressured by friends to follow it.

Proverbs 13:20 (Contemporary English Version CEV)

"Wise friends make you wise, but you hurt yourself by going around with fools."

- You can't soar with eagles if you're running with turkeys—choose your friends wisely
- If we want to follow God's directions, make sure your advice comes directly from God's Word.

1 John 3:7 (New Century Version NCV)

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you the wrong way. Christ is righteous. So to be like Christ a person must do what is right.

- I believe God wants us to have friends who are unbelievers. In fact, we're commanded to love everybody, regardless of their belief or lifestyle.
- But the difference is that we choose who gets to influence us and whom we'll influence.
- Every day we're faced with a decision:
 - o Am I going to be a *thermostat or a thermometer?*
 - o A *thermometer* reflects the temperature
 - o A *thermostat* sets the temperature of the environment

3. Stop looking to other sources besides God

If you're looking for direction, the best place to look is the owner's manual—The Word of God and the Creator who created you.

- If you're following the stars, psychic, or palm readers you're not following the Son.
- When we look to anything else besides God for guidance, we're going to receive the wrong advice and God will not be pleased.

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 (The Message)

When you enter the land that *GOD*, your *God*, is giving you, don't take on the abominable ways of life of the nations there.

Don't you dare sacrifice your son or daughter in the fire. Don't practice divination, sorcery, fortunetelling, witchery, casting spells, holding séances, or channeling with the dead. People who do these things are an abomination to *GOD*. It's because of just such abominable practices that *GOD*, your *God*, is driving these nations out before you.

The Start Doing List

Here's a list of three things to start doing in order to stay on track with God.

1. Start wanting to be led by God

- It starts with a deep desire, a longing, or a craving to follow Jesus Christ wherever He leads.
- When we become desperate enough, we will cry out to God to guide us because it's in our hearts.

Psalm 40:8 (NIV)

"I desire to do your will, my *God*; your law is within my heart."

2. Start becoming obedient to do what God says

Q = Are you willing to obey God?

- Approach your time with God with the intention of doing anything God ask you to do.

John 7:17 (Good News Translation GNT)

"Whoever is willing to do what God wants will know whether what I teach comes from God or whether I speak on my own authority."

"He guides me along the right paths
for His name's sake"

Psalms 23:3b (NIV)

3. Start listening to God through the Holy Spirit

If we're willing to allow God to guide us in order to stay on track, we must learn how to ***listen to God***.

Psalms 32:8 (NLT)

"The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."

- It's one thing to be guided and another thing to listen in order to be guided
 - o Guided—to be assisted by someone or to provide advice or counsel
 - o Listen—to give attention for the purpose of receiving

Mark 4:1-3a (NLT)

"1 Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore.

2 He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

3 "Listen!..."

Mark 7:14

"Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to understand."

- No one can listen for you, you must be willing to hear God for yourself.

Revelation 2:29

“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.”

- The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth

John 16:13 (NLT)

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.”

- The Holy Spirit will control our movements

Acts 10:19-20 (NLT)

19 Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, “Three men have come looking for you.

20 Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I have sent them.”

Q = How does God speak?

1. God speaks primarily through His Word

2 Timothy 3:16 (English Standard Version ESV)

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness”

John 1:1 (ESV)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2. God speaks through prayers

Jeremiah 33:3 (English Standard Version ESV)

"Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."

- According to Daniel 10:1-21, we have a personal account of the other side of prayer
- When Daniel had a burden for his people, he wanted to hear from God. Daniel went into prayer for his people.
- He enters into the other side of prayer as he waits for an answer from God.
- He is visited by an angel. The angel tells of his wrestling match with evil in trying to reach Daniel—a picture of how God fights for us to receive an answer to our prayers.
- We find in prayer that God gives strength, even for what seems overwhelming to comprehend.
- Through this text, we are reminded that God not only hears our prayers but sends the forces of Heaven to usher us into the other side of prayer in order for us to receive an answer.

3. God speaks through circumstances

James 1:2-4 (NLT)

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Q = How will I know It's God speaking to me?

1. God's messages are consistent with God's Word

- God's Word says what is true.
- God's Word demands what is right.
- God's Word provides wisdom, counsel, spiritual strength, hope, and guidance

2. God speaks in a quiet way.

1 King 19:9b-12 (NLT)

9 But the Lord said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

11 "Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

12 And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.

John 10:27-28 (NLT)

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me

3. **God speaks clearly.**

- We'll never have to look in a commentary or dictionary to figure out what God has said. God's messages are clear and understandable.

When you get home or by yourself with no distractions

- Meditate on **Psalm 23:3b (NIV)**
"He guides me along the right paths
for His name's sake"
 - o *First*, read the passage slowly, perhaps out loud a few times, placing emphasis on different words or phrases
 - o Second, reflect on the truth of the text, allow God to speak to you through the Holy Spirit
 - o Third, respond to God in light of what you've just read by either writing down your thoughts or sharing it with someone
 - o Fourth, rest in the Word of God, listen for what God has to say to you through Psalm 23:3b
 - o What decisions do you have to make? What direction are you anticipating in your life? Allow God to speak according to His promise in Psalm 23:3b