

“He Will Guide You”  
(Proverbs 3:5-6)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. The Lord has promised to meet all your needs, if you will walk with Him – if you will seek first His kingdom and righteousness.
  - a. He will give you food and covering, a long life, gracious protection, and peace with your enemies.
  - b. These are the things everyone wants, things we all seek after, but we so often look for in other places.
  
2. Because He’s promised to provide these things for you, you should look to Him to meet these needs, not to yourself or anyone else.
  - a. Jesus said by worrying you can’t add even one moment to your life.
  - b. He says He will take care of you. You just need to trust Him and walk with Him.

B. Preview.

1. This evening, let’s look at something else you need every day – direction, guidance, the wisdom to know which way to go each time you’re faced with a decision – and consider the Lord has promised to give this to you as well.
2. Let’s look at three things:
  - a. First, that if you walk with the Lord, He will guide you.
  - b. Second, how He will and won’t give you this guidance.
  - c. Finally, how you can know His will for you in any given situation.

II. Sermon.

A. Let’s consider first that the Lord will guide you.

1. You don’t have to lean on your own understanding when making the difficult decisions in life.
  - a. You can know that He will direct you.
  - b. How can you know that He will?
  - c. In the same way you know everything else the Lord has for you – through His promises.
  
2. You can hardly ask for a clearer passage than what He has given you in our text:
  - a. “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and *He will* make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).
  - b. But there are others:
    - (i) “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps” (Prov. 16:9).

- (ii) “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way” (Ps. 25:8-9).
- (iii) “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you” (Ps. 32:8).
- (iv) “Your ears will hear a word behind you, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left” (Isa. 30:21).
- (v) “Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, ‘I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go’” (48:17).
- (vi) “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

c. The Lord will direct your steps into the right way.

#### B. How will He do this?

1. First, understand there was a particular way He guided His people in the past that He will no longer do – and that is directly.
  - a. Before the Scriptures were complete, the Lord used to talk to some of His people audibly, and through dreams and visions.
    - (i) He would walk with Adam and Eve and converse with them in the evening.
    - (ii) He warned Noah that He was sending a Flood to destroy the world and to build an ark to save his household.
    - (iii) He called Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees to leave his people and go to the land He would show him.
    - (iv) He spoke to the Apostle Paul on several occasions and directed his missionary efforts.
  - b. But since the Scripture is now complete, He doesn’t guide that way any longer – if you don’t understand this, you can get into a great deal of trouble.
    - (i) I’ve known “well-meaning Christians” that believed the Lord was still speaking to them.
      - (a) One girl in a youth group who thought the Lord was telling her who would get married to whom – her predictions didn’t come true.
      - (b) Chuck and Donna McIlhenny ran into some well meaning Charismatics down in Australia who would only believe that what the Lord spoke directly to you had any spiritual relevance.
    - (ii) I’ve known several who looked to the “leading of the Spirit” to guide them – one in particular.
      - (a) He meant should follow our feelings, our inclinations of what we thought the Lord was telling us to do.
      - (b) He believed as long as he did this, he never made any mistakes or did anything wrong.
      - (c) What it really did was blinded him to his faults and sins.

- (iii) Is this really what it means to be led by the Lord?
    - (a) No. This is being led by your own thoughts, imaginations, or feelings.
    - (b) The Lord has not promised to guide you in this way.
2. But that doesn't mean He no longer gives direction. He does in two ways: 1) His Word, and 2) His Providence.
- a. First, He gives you His Word to guide you instead of direct revelation.
    - (i) Flavel writes, "The manner of God's revealing His will to men is (also) very different. Some have had special, personal, and peculiar discoveries of it made to them. So had Samuel about the choice of the person whom he should anoint king. . . . But now, all are tied up to the ordinary standing rule of the written Word, and must not expect any such extraordinary revelations from God. The way we now have to know the will of God concerning us in difficult cases, is to search and study the Scriptures, and where we find no particular rule to guide us in this or that particular case, there we are to apply general rules."
    - (ii) Everything you need is there – everything you need to know to glorify God, everything you need to know to do what you do for His glory.
    - (iii) If He doesn't tell you specifically what you are to do, He tells you generally.
  - b. Second, He also gives you Providence.
    - (i) The Lord gives us many general principles in Scripture, but there are still many things we need to know that He doesn't give, such as,
      - (a) What you should do for a vocation.
      - (b) What school or college you should attend to prepare for your vocation.
      - (c) What kind of car to drive, or what food to eat, or what time to get up in the morning or to go to sleep at night.
      - (d) It tells you how to do these things for His glory, but not specifically what you are to do.
    - (ii) For these you need to study God's Providence.
      - (a) This is another way He guides.
      - (b) He opens and closes doors – provides or withholds opportunities.
      - (c) He gives or withholds certain gifts and abilities.
      - (d) He moves or doesn't move your heart in one direction or another.
      - (e) The Lord guides you through the unfolding of His plan.
    - (iii) But here you do need to be careful:
      - (a) Just because a door is open doesn't mean you should pass through it.
      - (b) Just because you have the ability to do something doesn't mean you should.
      - (c) And just because you have the desire to do a particular thing doesn't mean it's the right thing to go. Sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't.
      - (d) You must judge everything you might be inclined to do by Scripture.

- (e) Again, Flavel writes, “The most signal [striking] demonstrations of Providence are not to be accepted against a Scripture-rule.”
- (f) This is why you should never allow your emotions or your desires to rule or guide you – otherwise, you will make the same mistakes as those who believe they are being led by the Spirit.
- (g) The Spirit leads through the Word and Providence.

C. Finally, so how can you find God’s will for your life in any given situation? Here are five simple rules Flavel gives:

1. “If therefore, in doubtful cases, you would discover God’s will, govern yourselves in your search after it by these rules: 1. Get the true fear of God upon your hearts; be really afraid of offending Him.”
  - a. Solomon tells us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
  - b. When have a reverent fear of the Lord, you will do all you can to make sure you don’t offend Him, that you don’t sin.
  - c. You will keep to His paths.
  - d. And you will do what follows more earnestly.
  
2. “Study the Word more, and the concerns and interests of the world less.”
  - a. The psalmist treasured God’s Word because it was able to show him both what offended the Lord and what pleased Him.
  - b. He knew if he walked with the Lord, not only would the Lord guide him, but his life would be blessed.
  - c. And so he studied the Word to seek his happiness in that direction, rather than in the direction of the world.
    - (i) Don’t keep looking to the world to fulfill your life.
    - (ii) It might make you happy for a while, but it will leave you spent and empty in the end.
    - (iii) Only the Lord can make you ultimately happy.
      - (a) If you don’t understand this, don’t rely on our own understanding.
      - (b) You can’t trust what your heart tells you – you must trust what the Lord tells you to guide you through life.
      - (c) He knows you far better than you will ever know yourself.
      - (d) And He knows far more than you how the world can destroy you.
  
3. “Reduce what you know into practice, and you shall know what is your duty to practice.”
  - a. Apply what you know of God’s will to your situation.
  - b. You may not know exactly what to do, but if you have some idea, do it.
  - c. The more you apply the Word, the better you will understand it, and so the more you apply the Word, the more you will be able to apply it.
  
4. “Pray for illumination and direction in the way that you should go.”
  - a. Don’t forget always to seek the Lord for His direction.
  - b. Pray that He would open His Word to you, that He would show you how to apply His Word to your situation.

- c. And trust that He will according to the promise you have in Proverbs 3:5-6 and other passages.
5. Finally, “And this being done, follow Providence as far as it agrees with the Word, and no farther.”
- a. After you’ve prayed, searched the Scripture, and applied it as best as you can, then begin to consider what the Lord might be showing you through His Providence – through the doors that are opened before you, through the desires you have, the gifts you have.
  - b. But make sure you don’t take one step in a direction the Lord clearly forbids.
    - (i) If it’s sin, it’s not an option.
    - (ii) But if it’s good, if it glorifies God, if it’s useful to others, and if He has given you the gifts to do it, then do it.
    - (iii) Make sure you always acknowledge Him and His Word at every point.
    - (iv) And He will direct your paths. Amen.

<http://www.graceopcmodesto.org>