Send questions to: pastornick@htchurch.com On YouTube: @htchurch

1. God promises to guide us.

> I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you. (Psalms 32:8-9)

- There is a way in which we should go.
- He wants to guide us with His eye. He wants to lead me, not force me. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27).
- God also wants us to increase in wisdom and in partnership with Him: "…as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

The Bible's most famous psalm is about trust and guidance:

> The LORD is my **shepherd**; I shall not want. He **makes** me to lie down in green pastures; He **leads** me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He **leads** me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I **walk** through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are **with** me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalms 23:1-4)

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Look how central guidance is to the 23rd Psalm. Even in the valley, He is with you – and if He's been leading you, then He must be the one that led you there in the first place!

2. The Value of Wisdom.

In the Old Testament, *wisdom* was the ability to discern the nature of a thing: *analysis*. *Understanding* was then using that wisdom to compare and contrast things and situations. This is what we tend to call discernment, or critical thinking. The men of Issachar had *understanding* of the times (1 Chronicles 12:32).

Solomon wrote about wisdom extensively in the Book of Proverbs. Read King David's words: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (3:5-6).

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; she will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory she will deliver to you" (4:7-9).

3. God's Providential Guidance.

Providence is God wisely arranging our circumstances, typically without us knowing it. God invites us to pray, but He reserves many other things to His own Wisdom and Will. "…God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another" (Psalms 75:7).

God wants to guide us by using His power to arrange circumstances for His greatest glory and our greatest ultimate joy. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). God makes all things work together for **those who love Him**.

4. Godly Decision-making.

We need to follow biblical principles if we’re going to discern His Will and do it.

4.1. Adhering to the Word of God.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Holy Spirit authored the Scriptures, so He **won’t** lead you to do things which violate the Scriptures. The Bible governs every revelation and spiritual experience.

We need the Word for the renewing of our minds. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove [or “discern”] what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

4.2. Human Stubbornness.

Our hearts must be soft enough to surrender our feelings, judgments, and desires to the Word. Many people grieve the Holy Spirit by seeking a way around the Word.

4.3. Wisdom and guidance through the fear of the Lord and our integrity.

"The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them" (Proverbs 11:3). Remember Joseph and Potiphar's wife. "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death" (Prov. 14:27).

4.4. The Witness of the Spirit.

The witness of the spirit is when the living Holy Spirit within us testifies to **our** spirits that something is either true, or not true. The Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16).

Our spirit is the part of us that was designed to relate to God, spirit to spirit. It is sensitive to the presence of the Holy Spirit in others, as well as the presence of demons. Recall: John the Baptist could sense the presence of God (Luke 1:41-44).

Assuming that what we're sensing lines up with the Word, our major indicator of God's Will about a thing may be whether we have peace in our spirits about it. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). We must commit the thing to God so that we're no longer anxious about it; we must be willing to have His Will, whatever it is.

How do we understand a verse like "Delight yourself… in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Psalms 37:4)?

Have we truly made our requests to God with prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving?

Notice that God gives us a peace that goes beyond human understanding. That may sound subjective, but then again, don't we believe that God is real?

4.5. A word about circumstances.

This is the third major factor to consider.

- Is God providing?
- We need God's leading as to timing.
- And we don't force circumstances either. Learn from David's early struggles.
- Sometimes we are like Joseph: his prophetic word **tried** him.
- We must continue to wait before the Lord and continue to pray. Resistance can come from several different directions – or you simply might not be ready!

It's also good to ask God for **confirmation**. It's a biblical principle to have two or three witnesses. Seek wise counsel from other people as well.

"[S]olid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:14, ESV). What makes the difference is whether we are growing and training our powers of discernment.

5. Issues in Supernatural Guidance.

5.1. God's Wisdom… and the other kind.

What is the nature of the advice that you're turning over in your mind?

> Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.
>
> (James 3:13-17)

When God's wisdom comes to you, the leading it gives you is peaceable. When God is leading, we sense His gentleness, not anxiety.

Refuse supernatural guidance that is not scriptural (occult or New Age guidance). Be careful also about praying supposedly Christian prayers that are unbiblical. There is **one** mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

5.2. Supernatural Guidance and Signs.

A supernatural leading always needs to be measured against the Scriptures. Let two or three prophets speak and let the others judge (1 Corinthians 14:29).

5.3. Being alert for the Lord's impressions.

One level of "speech" we can hear in our spirits is what people call "impressions," for lack of a better term. Many people have been protected in this way. There is also a stronger form of this "prophetic perception": in Acts 14, Paul "perceived" that a certain man had faith to be healed. In Acts 27, he "perceived" his trip would be dangerous.

5.4. What is "discerning of spirits?"

This is a gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us to judge prophecies, or to know whether a spiritual manifestation is coming from God or another source.

- It doesn't mean that you're a "good judge of character," or insightful.
- This gift typically manifests when a believer is confronted with a situation that seems to have a spiritual element to it.
- It may even be the opening of the eyes to view spiritual realities that are typically invisible to us (see 2 Kings 6:17).

6. Conclusion: follow the Good Shepherd!

Things that are supernatural are not necessarily from God! Because false miracles are a possibility, the Bible commands us to test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1 John 4:1). "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

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