

SEEKING GUIDANCE OR THE GUIDE

Wednesday, February 28

Reading: Psalm 25

Psalm 25:4 *Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. 5 Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long...* **8** *Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.*

Missionary Elizabeth Elliot tells of two adventurers who stopped by to see her at the mission station. They were all loaded with equipment for the rain forest east of the Andes. They sought no advice, just a few phrases to converse with the native population. She writes:

“Sometimes we come to God as the two adventurers came to me - confident and, we think, well-informed and well equipped. But has it occurred to us that with all our accumulation of stuff, something is missing?” She suggests that we often ask God for far too little. “We know what we need - a yes or no answer, please, to a simple question. Or perhaps a road sign. Something quick and easy to point the way. What we really ought to have is the Guide Himself. Maps, road signs, a few useful phrases are things, but infinitely better is someone who has been there before and knows the way.”¹

Psalm 25 talks a lot about God’s direction. David uses three different words repeatedly in this psalm to describe what God wants to do in our lives. The first word is “teach” (25:4, 5, 9). In Hebrew, this word has to do with training. Its root comes from a term used to describe the training of an ox by using a goad to keep it on course. To be taught God’s ways and paths is to submit to His Word and discipline.

The second word used is “guide” (25:5, 9). The basic meaning of this word has to do with treading or walking a path. It is often used in military contexts for “treading the enemy underfoot” and even for bending a bow to string the arrow. All this reminds us that to be guided on God’s path takes effort. It is a daily battle to follow the Lord’s leading and not get off track.

The third word David uses is “instruct” (25:8, 12). The root meaning of the word has to do with casting or throwing. When referring to instruction it can picture the aiming of the lesson for a specific purpose. God’s aim is to instruct His people to make the right choices. The word also strongly implies a close relationship between teacher and student. Without this close bond the lesson will have little effect.

Another important feature of this psalm is its description of the kind of person who receives God’s direction. We must be people who are immersed in His Word and truth (25:4-5). We must not be wise in our own eyes but humbly recognize our sins and limitations (25:8-11). God “confides” in those who trust in His goodness, mercy, and love (25:6-8) and reverence Him (25:12-14). When we have these attitudes, the Lord will give us His wisdom so we know the right paths to take.

Let’s not be like the two adventurers! Let’s get to know the Guide and not just seek for “something quick and easy to point the way.”

¹ Quiet moments with God Devotional Journal for Women. January 17th Reading., David C Cook Publishing