

HOW TO RECEIVE GOD'S GUIDANCE

Habakkuk 2:1-2

May 18, 2008 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. GPS devices-handheld and in cars can provide you with directions. i.e. Gay's dad argued with his GPS when he took an out of state trip because he believed going another way was faster. I guess you have to have confidence in your GPS device or perhaps less confidence in yourself!
- B. How can we receive God's guidance?
 - 1. This is the question we have been addressing in past weeks except for Senior Adult Sunday and Mother's Day.
 - 2. In our first message on how to hear God speaking to us we learned four things we can do to help us hear him.
 - a. Expect God to speak to us.
 - b. Set aside time for God to speak to us.
 - c. Cut out distractions that may block out God's voice.
 - d. Say yes or surrender to whatever God says to us.
 - 3. In the second message on this subject we learned how God speaks to us today.
 - a. First, it must be said God can speak any way he chooses.
 - b. The Bible.
 - c. Other people.
 - d. Life's events or circumstances.
 - e. Pain.
 - f. Impressions or in our minds.
 - 4. In the third message on this subject we learned seven tests to apply to our impressions or thoughts to be sure they come from God and not just ourselves, or worse, from the devil. Ask....
 - a. Does it agree with the Bible?
 - b. Does it make us more like Jesus?
 - c. Can our church family confirm it?
 - d. Is it consistent with how God made us?
 - e. Is it a word for us or someone else?
 - f. Does it convict us or condemn us?
 - g. Do we have peace about it?
- C. Before we leave this study, let's look at four things we can do to receive guidance from God when making a major decision.
- D. However, before we do this, let's briefly consider three prerequisites for seeking God's guidance. What are they?
 - 1. First, believe God is interested in the details of your life-Matthew 6:31-32.
 - 2. Second, Ask God specific questions when seeking his guidance-James 1:5.
 - 3. Third, expect God to give you his guidance-James 1:6.
- E. Now, let's discover how to receive guidance from God.
 - 1. What steps should we follow?
 - 2. They are found in our text-Hab. 2:1-2 (**READ**).

I. FIRST, WE MUST "WITHDRAW" TO RECEIVE GOD'S GUIDANCE.

- A. This was what Hab. did-2:1 "I will stand at my watch."
 - 1. Hab. was a prophet to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. (Kingdom divided into Northern and Southern sections after Solomon's death).
 - 2. His book was probably written shortly before 600 B.C.

3. By this time, the Northern Kingdom of Israel had already been destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 B.C.
 4. The Babylonians had just become the world's greatest super power by defeating the Assyrians and the Egyptians. They collected tribute or taxes from everyone, including Judah.
 5. The people in Hab.'s day were wondering where God was in all of this. Why hadn't God rescued Judah from this evil superpower? Do you ever have thoughts like this?
 6. Hab.'s book is his attempt to answer this question. He told the people in his day and now in our day how to receive guidance from God, especially when you need it the most.
 7. Hab. says the first step is to "withdraw" if you want to hear God's voice.
- B. One of the reasons we don't hear God speak to us more often is that we are surrounded by noise.
1. Do you have a place where you can withdraw and be alone and quiet with God?
 2. Jesus had such a place-Luke 5:16.
 3. Susanna Wesley did too. She was the mother of John and Charles Wesley. John is considered the founder of the Methodist church and his brother Charles was one of our greatest gospel hymn writers (16 of his hymns are in our Baptist hymnal). But they were not their mother's only children. She had 18. Where do you ever find a quiet place to pray with 18 snot nosed kids? She found a solution. Every afternoon she would sit in her living room and throw her apron up over her head. All 18 children knew not to bother mommy because she was in her quiet place.
 4. We all need a quiet place to withdraw and be alone with God. This is the first step to receiving guidance from God.

II. SECOND, WE MUST "WAIT" TO RECEIVE GOD'S GUIDANCE.

- A. This is what Hab. did-2:1 "I will....station myself on the ramparts."
1. One paraphrase says, "I will wait". (Good News Edition).
 2. What does it mean to station yourself?
 - a. It means don't move, stay put, don't run around, be still-Psa. 46:10.
 - b. It means we shouldn't make a decision until we hear from God.
- B. Most of us seldom hear from God because we aren't willing to wait for his answer.
1. Hab. encourages us in verse 3b, however, to do just that, wait.
 2. Too often we run ahead of God and make the wrong decision rather than practice godly patience and wait for his answer.
 3. The world says, "Don't just stand there, do something". God, however says, "Don't do something, just stand there". (until we hear from Him).

III. THIRD, WE MUST "WATCH" TO RECEIVE GOD'S GUIDANCE.

- A. This is what Hab. did-2:1 "I will look to see what he will say to me."
- B. Many of us fail to hear God speak to us because we aren't looking to see what happens next after we pray.
1. We must make the connection between our prayers and what goes on around us after we pray.
 2. The old joke about the man trapped on his roof in a flood is a prime example of this. God sent him a raft, a power boat, and a helicopter, but he refused all three because he said he was waiting for God to rescue him instead.
 3. This is why Jesus said several times—"Watch and pray" Matthew 26:41.

IV. FOURTH, WE MUST “WRITE” DOWN THE GUIDANCE WE RECEIVE FROM GOD.

- A. This is what Hab. did-2:2 “Write down the revelation.”
- B. What does this mean for us today?
 - 1. It means we should keep a prayer notebook or recording of our prayers and God’s answers.
 - a. This encourages us to develop the habit of watching for God’s answers to our prayers.
 - b. This also enables us to remember what God says to us or asks us to do.
 - 2. Writing down the revelation can also mean keeping a spiritual journal.
 - a. This is a diary of our talking to God.
 - b. Its also a record of what God says to us.
 - 3. Both a prayer notebook and a spiritual journal can be a source of encouragement that we can review to remind us what we have said to God and how he has responded to us.

CONCLUSION

- A. A GPS might be nice to have in order to find your way around.
- B. We already have a spiritual GPS, though. It’s the voice of God giving us daily guidance.
- C. Let’s follow Hab.’s example to receive God’s guidance.....
 - 1. Withdraw.
 - 2. Wait.
 - 3. Watch.
 - 4. Write.
- D. Is your GPS turned on and tuned in to God’s voice?