



How does God Guide?

Introduction

How do I know what God wants me to do? How do I choose the right thing? These questions could lead us down a spiral of fear, but that is certainly not what God intends for us. He loves us and perfect love drives out fear (1 John 4v18).

God is not obscure, but **speaks to us in ways we can understand**. There would be no point in God giving us the Bible, Jesus or the Holy Spirit if we could not understand them!

So God does not want us to worry about guidance, but to expect God to speak to us with clarity.

Proverbs 3v5,6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths." This puts the emphasis on our trust in God and mindfulness of God, and follows with a simple "he will direct"! So how will he direct? The following are some thoughts to help.

The guide flows from front to back page with a worksheet inside to help you think about God's calling on your life and what he may want you to do.

1) Do not worry

Many choices and decisions do not matter, but we can trust God to ordain our circumstances such that we choose the way which is ultimately best. Psalm 139v2&4 says, "God knows our thoughts from afar ... before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely": so God knows how you will respond to a situation. This brings us back to Proverbs 3v6 "In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths."

It may sometimes feel like we must have made a wrong decision, **but God works through all things for good** (Romans 8v28). Good decisions do not always lead to an easy life. Consider the story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50); even though and sometime because he tried to do what was right, his life did not go well for some years. But in the end he was able to say to his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good" Gen 50v20.

2) When God speaks loud and clear

A) **God speaks with authority in the Bible.** The Bible is applicable to all of us as believers and directly addresses, for example, the following areas:

- a) Morality (e.g. Exodus 20, Matthew 5v21-7v12, Colossians 3v5-10)
- b) Priorities (e.g. Matthew 6v33, 1 Corinthians 12v31-13v13)
- c) Christian Disciplines (e.g. Hebrews 10v25, 1 Corinthians 11v23-25, Matthew 6v1-18)
- d) Christian Character (e.g. Galatians 5v22)
- e) Use of Resources for others (e.g. Matthew 25v14-30, 2 Timothy 1v6, 1 Corinthians 12v7)

See “*Love God as Sovereign – Living His Reign in My Life*” worksheet

B) **God speaks clearly into our lives by the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit may use a passage of the Bible, a confirmed prophetic word from another source, or simply prompt an urge in your heart (e.g. Acts 16v6-10). This often comes out of a continual mindfulness of God. It pays to wonder if it is the Holy Spirit speaking, or our own thinking: the Holy Spirit will never conflict with the Bible which is the Word of God. *See centre pages.*

3) God's Gifted you with Spiritual wisdom and common sense

God has given us natural common sense and the Spirit of wisdom (Romans 12v2, Ephesians 1v17). Some things in life are not absolute, but one course of action is wiser than others depending on the situation. Wisdom and common sense asks the following questions when making decisions:

- a) Does God speak into this situation in the Bible?
- b) What suits the gifts and resources God has given me?
- c) What most benefits those around me?
- d) What is the most natural course to take?
- e) Will this encourage or discourage my Christian walk or lead me into unhelpful temptation?

Identifying God's Calling in My Life Worksheet (Fruitful Disciples session 2)

“You are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which he prepared in advance for you to do” Ephesians 2v10 . “You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.” Psalm 139v13. These verses tell us that God has made you as an individual for a purpose. He knows your strengths and weaknesses, he knows the elements of you which when developed will excel.

God is not random, and so he has a calling on your life which will utilize who he has made you to be. A useful way to understand more of who God has made you to be is the SHAPE tool. This was developed by Erik Rees of Saddleback Church, California. If you wish more detail than below, there is a more detailed booklet on our website or you can obtain his materials on-line.

You can note in here areas where you feel you have a strength and also areas where you have a basic gift which could be developed further.

	Explanation	Areas of strength	Areas to develop
		These are things that you are already strong in and have been developed.	These are areas of potential and which are worth exploring and developing.
Spiritual Gifts	These are gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to Christians as outlined in Romans 12v4-8 ; 1 Corinthians 12v1-11, 27-31 . Like abilities (below) you can find out your gifts as you experiment with them. These reflect a contribution you can make to a team.		
Heart	God has made your heart to be passionate about certain things, people and issues. These probably reflect the area of work or ministry team which would engage you (eg youth, worship, poverty ...).		
Abilities	These are the natural abilities God has given you. You have probably found through your life as you have tried different things that some things you have a natural talent in and are worth developing. These reflect the contribution you can make to a team. These can include your resources such as time, possessions, contacts etc.		
Personality	These are your core characteristics and include the way you think (eg task orientated or person orientated) the way you connect with others (eg introvert or extrovert) etc.		
Experience	These are the circumstances you have been through in life from which you have been able to learn from and help others and/or a team through.		