

137 Guidance on Guidance - Part 3

The Lord wants His people to "walk in His ways", both generally and also specifically, in the choices we face and the decisions we take along life's daily path. As we seek the Lord's specific guidance in specific situations, whatever their scale or nature, in previous Reflections we have seen the need for maturity and faith on our part. We are to abide in the Lord, coming to Him with a right attitude - humble, but expectant. We study His Word for His already-given guidance in the situation we face, perhaps using those "P-Rs" if we find them helpful (PRecedents / PRomises / PRinciples, leading to His PRomptings of us). On we now go -

5 WE SEEK THE LORD'S GUIDANCE THROUGH OUR PRAYERS: We "wait on the Lord", asking Him to lead us, to "make His way plain before our face" (Psalm 5.8).

It can be helpful in our prayers to try to look at things from the Lord's side, as much as we are able: "Lord, what do you SEE as you survey this situation? What do you KNOW and THINK about any characters or issues involved here? What do you actually WANT in all this? So Lord, please, what are you SAYING to me in all this?". Our listening in such times is far more important than our speaking! Patience, stillness, honesty, faith, humility, perseverance - the old keys to a strong prayer relationship with the Lord - all have their place.

6 WE SEEK THE LORD'S GUIDANCE THROUGH EACH OTHER: How precious it is to have close Christian companions, with whom we can go through things quietly and prayerfully, under the old adage of "two minds are better than one". In particular we should value the counsel and prayers of wise old Christians - those saints now filled with decades of rugged spiritual experience, whose very humility means they will not be forthcoming with their wisdom unless they are sought out. Our fellow Christians do not take our decisions for us - that responsibility is still ours - but they do make such a difference along the way.

7 WE SEEK THE LORD'S GUIDANCE THROUGH PROFESSIONALS: Where appropriate, the Lord's guidance may well come in part through professional advice, perhaps over matters of health or finances. We must ensure that any such advice we are given sits comfortably in the light of God's Word.

8 WE SEEK THE LORD'S GUIDANCE PERHAPS THROUGH A PROPHECY: Prophecy has always been controversial! - just think of the many clashes in

Scripture between true and false prophets, and the wide-ranging reactions to true prophecy. By its very nature prophecy also offers the speaker instant attention and status, so there is no guarantee that any claimed prophecy is truly of the Lord.

A prophecy can also become a wrong obsession for the one who thinks these words were for him or her. We once knew a single Christian girl whose life was now dominated by a prophecy from some years before which she thought was for her - that she would be married one day. Frankly, she was now self-obsessed, far from pleasant, ready to blame the Lord and others for her woes, and making little effort to find a good Christian husband for herself - a sad and stark example of the misuse of a prophecy.

So we do well to tread carefully in this area, checking with Scripture and other Christians over any prophecy we feel the Lord may have given us. If it is strongly clashing with other guidance-pointers, that is a sure sign that it is not "of the Lord".

9 WE SEEK THE LORD'S GUIDANCE PERHAPS THROUGH A FLEECE:
Gideon is the main "fleece man" in Scripture (Judges 6.36-40), and sometimes it may be appropriate for us "to put out a fleece" before the Lord: we humbly ask Him to arrange things in a certain way by a certain date, which we will take as His confirmation that we are hearing His guidance aright. A fleece may have a place, but needs to be used sparingly and never as the main or sole form of guidance.

Next time God willing, we round off this list of ways in which the Lord grants us His guidance. For now we can be encouraged as always, that we are precious to the Lord, that He wants us to get things right, and is ever-ready to enable us to do so.

"Then watch how carefully you walk, not as unwise, but as wise ones, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Because of this do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5.15-17, Literal).

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