

Making Decisions to the Glory of God

by Coty Pinckney 4/3/2009

Many people today want guidance. They want a word from God to know:

- Whom to marry,
- what job to take,
- whether or not to buy a house,
- whether to take money out of the stock market or leave it in.

There are also many decisions considered more “spiritual” in which we want God to lead us:

- To attend one church or another;
- to go into long-term missionary work or not;
- to go into full time ministry or not;
- to focus on one unreached people group or another;
- to go on one short term mission trip or another.

Can you count on God’s guidance in making such decisions?

The Bible clearly teaches that God sovereignly calls and guides His people to carry out His plans. We saw a wonderful example of this [last Sunday](#) in Acts 15:36-16:15. Paul makes decision after decision about his second missionary journey, fulfilling God’s missionary mandate as best as he can determine; most of his decisions – to take Silas with him, to travel by land to Galatia, to circumcise Timothy, to stop in Philippi, to seek those worshipping God by the river, to stay with Lydia – are made without any noted supernatural direction. But then at times the Holy Spirit supernaturally guides Paul, redirecting him away from Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6-7) and towards Macedonia (Acts 16:9).

God does call and guide His people to carry out His plans.

Will He guide you?

If God guides *His people*, the question then becomes: Are you truly one of His?

That is:

- Do you acknowledge that although He is your Creator, you have violated the very purpose of your creation, by failing to live for His glory?
- Do you acknowledge that you therefore deserve His punishment, His rejection?
- Do you recognize Jesus as God incarnate, fully God and fully man?
- Do you believe that He came to earth to live the life you should have lived, and to die on the cross to pay the penalty you rightfully should pay?
- Do you treasure Him, desire to know Him, and want to love Him with all your heart?

If you can’t say that – then turn! He is there! You can be His! Trust Him. Love Him.

If you are not His, He *does* still guide you. And His guidance to you is absolutely clear: He commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30); He calls you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus be saved.

So don’t even ask guidance in other areas of your life until you’ve followed His clear direction and command. Believing in Christ comes first.

Then, once you are His, seek His guidance by following Him the way Paul followed. There are two steps:

First: Obey what is clear in Scripture

The Psalmist says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). The *Bible* lights our way, showing us where to go. *God’s Word* is our primary source of guidance, telling us everything we need to know to follow Him. *Scripture* is our primary source of guidance, and our only infallible authority.

The Bible directs us in two different ways. First, it gives us numerous commands about what to *be*, about the character we are to take on. For example, the Bible tells us:

- To be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18);
- To bear the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23);
- To pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness (1 Timothy 6:11);
- To keep our eyes fixed on things above, not on earthly things (Colossians 3:1-2);
- To store up for ourselves treasures in heaven, not treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19-21);
- Not to love the world or the things in the world (1 John 2:15-17).

All these are commands about what type of man or woman we are to be. Together, they all say: *Be like Jesus Christ* by His power, taking on His character.

But in addition to commands concerning our character, the Bible also directs us in a second way: By giving us commands about many things that we are to *do*:

- Make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20);
- Love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:31);
- Give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7);
- Show hospitality to strangers (Hebrews 13:2);
- Remember those who are in prison (Hebrews 13:3);
- Care for orphans and widows in their affliction (James 1:27);
- Be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

This is only a sample; we could go on and on.

We don’t need direct guidance to know God’s will in these areas. The only question is: How will you go about fulfilling these commands?

Don’t expect guidance on marriage or a job search or anything else when you are dishonoring God by failing to obey this clear guidance from Him, these clear commands about what to *be* and about what to *do*. Pursue Him first!

So the first step in seeking God’s guidance is: Obey Scripture! Aim to become like Christ, by the Holy Spirit who lives in you! And, filled by His power, act like Christ!

Second: For those decisions that are unclear in Scripture:

There are many such decisions we must make every day. Don't expect God to give you signs through a voice or a vision. Surely God can lead any way He likes, but as we have seen, that is not His usual way of operating even in the book of Acts; Paul makes most of his decisions without such signs. Scripture gives us no promise of such guidance.

But Scripture does promise us that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him, those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Therefore, in these unclear areas, pray that your desires might line up with God's; decide on a plan that seems to you to work to God's glory in your life and in the lives of others; then step out in faith! Don't be hamstrung, waiting for a signal. Instead, be like Paul: Trust in God's sovereignty, and step out. Be obedient. Be confident. Know that if He doesn't want you to go that direction, He is well able to turn you around, just as He kept Paul from going into Bithynia.

If you belong to Christ, then God has called you. He has called you to become like Him. He has called you to act like Him, to be His agents of change in this world.

So step out! Like Lydia (Acts 16:15), consider what you can do with what you have, and do it. Pray, "Lord God, please use me to play my role in filling the earth with the knowledge of Your glory as the waters cover the sea. Here's one way I can imagine that happening. I will step out in that way. Please use me in this way; please bless these efforts to your glory. Or, stop me, redirect me, and guide me into other ways that I can fulfill Your purposes. I trust You, that You are sovereign, and that You will use me as You see fit."

God sovereignly calls His people to Himself, and then He guides them to carry out His plans.

Believe in Him – and step out, for His glory.