

## **Divine Guidance: What It Is; What It Isn't**

I like what Abraham Lincoln said about God's leading: "*I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do (or not to do) any particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it.*"

There is no shortage of ideas about knowing and doing God's will.

### **Here are ten scenarios that have nothing to do with Divine Direction:**

**1. Seeking God's *approval* for choices or decisions I have already made.** And even when any number of Christians agree on something, that does not automatically mean it is *God's will*.

**2. Putting out a fleece.** I personally don't recommend the use of fleece – dry, damp or metaphorical. There is too much room for personally-biased interpretation and even manipulation of the circumstances. Remember: Gideon already knew God's will when he came up with the idea of the fleece.

**3. Usefulness.** Some people are useful no matter where you put them; they seem to do well no matter what their assignment. But God does not always put us where he can best *use* us; sometimes he puts us where we can be *tested*, and he always puts us where we will *glorify* him. He even puts us in situations where *we don't minister* but, rather, where we are ministered to.

**4. Advancement.** Just because a promotion is involved, does not mean God is in the change or in the move.

**5. Aptitude and suitability.** God often chooses the least likely person. When the Lord called Moses and, later, Jeremiah, both of them insisted they couldn't do it: they had no talent, no training, no scholarly degrees, no experience, no speaking ability. In any case, the Lord is our competency.

**6. Being well liked.** You don't assume you should stay in one place "forever" just because no one is asking you to leave. When the Lord is leading, people's love, hatred or indifference has nothing to do with your going or staying.

**7. Logic.** What was logical about God's telling Abram to sacrifice Isaac? God doesn't think the way humans think. So it pays to "...have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

**8. Rank or status.** The Lord's leading puts no importance on a person's seniority within an organization or company.

**9. Need.** God's guidance has nothing to do with humanly perceived need. Need is a comparative, subjective notion. Philip was told to leave the crowds of Samaria to minister to one individual on an isolated road between Jerusalem and Gaza.

**10. Success.** God will move you whether or not you are, or will be, successful. The Lord called Ezekiel to a special task and told him, in advance, that his efforts would be futile, that the project would be a failure. People tend to focus on *success*; God focuses on *purpose*.

### What, then, *is* Divine guidance?

- Not surprisingly, it is *Divine* Guidance - not *human* rationale or effort. "...you are led by the Spirit..." (Gal. 5:18).
- Divine guidance is not always completely clear from start to finish. Sometimes it's just our taking one step at a time.
- Family and friends may not understand or approve of our divinely directed choices and actions.
- We ourselves may not initially want to agree with God's call or direction. We may not understand, we may not see any sense in it.
- And, there may be a relational or organizational or financial price to pay.

Ideally, we do not go looking for God's will; it comes looking for us. We do not *find* God's will; we find ourselves in it; *it's a way of life*. We do not dial for divine guidance; instead, we ourselves are *on call* 24/7.

Solomon said it so well in Proverbs 3:5-6. He tells you to *trust* the Lord... wholeheartedly. Don't depend on your own intelligence. Identify with him in *all* your ways; don't leave him out of anything. You not only *put* him in everything; you put him *first* in everything. Then, and only then, he will direct your whole life. ◇◇