

International Conversation Cafe

Bible Topic: How Does God Guide?

All through our lives we find we need direction. We use maps and a GPS so we don't get lost when trying to get to a certain location. Teachers and employers instruct us how to do the work they require. Parents provide our first advice about all aspects of life. At an early age they tell us what clothes to wear, how to sit at the table with good manners, how to greet older people, and when to take a bath. As we get older their direction turns to advice about choices we make; who makes a good friend, what is a good major in school for us, and what kind of car to buy. Parents also advise us about our attitudes. They try to instill in us cheerfulness, courage, perseverance, and kindness.

Tell about a time you were lost. How did you get help?

The Bible clearly teaches that God guides those who follow him. How? Consider these four ways.

1. God tells a believer in Psalm 32, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye."

Do you think it is possible to be guided by God? How do you feel about this thought?

2. God has a purpose for our lives. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, "God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it."

God made us. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good things. Long ago God prepared them for us to do."

How do you feel about the idea of God having a plan for us to do good things?

3. Our priorities will determine our choices. If our purpose is to get rich, be successful, and famous, then we will make choices to get to that end. If our priorities are to love God more than anything else and to do the good works he planned for us, then we will make choices that fit that direction. Consider the life of Saul whose name was changed to Paul.

Acts 9 (Saul hated and persecuted the followers of Jesus. He was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus to find believers and arrest them so they would be put to death.)

v.3 On his journey, Saul approached Damascus. Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him. "Saul! Saul!" the voice said. "Why are you opposing me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus," he replied. "I am the one you are opposing. Now get up and go into the city. There you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there. They weren't able to speak. They had heard the sound. But they didn't see anyone. Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he couldn't see. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind. He didn't eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a believer named Ananias.

Then Ananias went to the house (where Saul was staying) and entered it. He placed his hands on Saul. "Brother Saul," he said, "you saw the Lord Jesus. He appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He has sent me so that you will be able to see again. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Right away something like scales fell from Saul's eyes. And he could see again. He got up and was baptized. After eating some food, he got his strength back.

Saul spent several days with the believers in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues. He taught that Jesus is the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed. They asked, "Isn't he the man who caused great trouble in Jerusalem for those who worship Jesus? Hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" But Saul grew more and more powerful. The Jews living in Damascus couldn't believe what was happening. Saul proved to them that Jesus is the Christ.

*Put the story in your own words. How did Saul's priorities change?
Give examples of people who achieved their goals based on their priorities.
Give examples of how your priorities guide you.*

4. God gives us wisdom.

a. God promises to give wisdom to those who believe he will help.

James 1:5 If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn't find fault.

But when you ask, you must believe. You must not doubt. People who doubt are like waves of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around. A man like that shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord.

b. The Holy Spirit helps us understand God's word. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "But the Father will send the Friend in my name to help you. The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you."

c. We listen to the advice of wise people around us. Proverbs 15:22 "Plans fail without good advice. But they succeed when there are many advisers."

d. We use common sense, or good judgment. It would be things like checking the oil and tire pressure for your car before it breaks down from neglect.

Why would someone consider what God wants when they make a decision?