

God Gives Direction
Discerning God's Will—part 1
May 28, 2017

DAY 1: God gives direction

Psalm 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

1. God is not “far off” from you. He wants you to be with you, and lead you into the life He desires for you.

2. What about Psalm 32:8 ...

a. Surprises you?

b. Encourages you?

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope.

3. When God gave this verse to His people they were in exile! They had steadfastly and stubbornly refused to listen to God or respond to His repeated cries for repentance, faith, and obedience.

4. Yet, even in an exile, far away from their homeland, God still knows them and loves them. What about Jeremiah 29:11 ...

a. Surprises you?

b. Encourages you?

Isaiah 58:11 And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

5. What is your take away from today's devotional?

DAY 2: God is our shepherd

John 10:11 I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

1. What seems most difficult for people in following God is trusting whether or not His direction is better than what we want to do. Trusting ourselves comes so much “easier.” How do Jesus’ words in John 10:11 encourage you to trust Him as the shepherd of your life?

2. King David penned some of the most well-known lyrics of all time!

Psalms 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;

² he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

3. For each verse, jot down what strikes you from David’s testimony about God being his shepherd:

v. 1 –

v. 2 –

v. 3 –

v. 4 –

v. 5 –

v. 6 –

4. Which of these verses strikes you the most? Why?

DAY 3: We are sheep

1. Jesus compares His children to sheep. It is a “mixed” metaphor!

a. On one hand the shepherd-sheep relationship is one of tenderness, protection, direction, and provision.

b. On the other hand, sheep are known for wandering away, running right into trouble or peril, and not being able to find their way.

2. As you think about yourself being Jesus’ sheep, how have you seen yourself as a sheep? Which of the above descriptions about being a sheep tend to be true of you? Of the Shepherd toward you?

3. Jesus the Shepherd commits Himself to calling to His sheep. When it comes to leading sheep, the Shepherd is far more intent in giving direction than the sheep are for hearing direction.

John 10:27-28 My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they shall never perish and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

4. What comfort or assurance do you find from Jesus being your Shepherd?

5. The Shepherd-sheep relationship is also a personal one. You are not just “a” sheep among millions to this Shepherd ...

John 10:3 To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

John 10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

6. Often as Christians, we worry that we may miss God’s direction, not hear His voice. We do have a responsibility to listen and obey the Shepherd, but we underestimate God’s ability to give direction, repeatedly.

7. As you think about following God’s leading in your life, what strikes you from the Shepherd-sheep metaphor?

DAY 4: Danger #1: Trusting our own judgment

1. One of the “best” biblical books for showing the worst of human nature is the book of Judges. There is a sentence that is the most damning in the entire book, repeated in generation after generation:

“And they did what was right in their own eyes.”

2. In our world today, the same sentence and the thought that drives that sentence is seen as a virtue.

3. The bible warns us not to do that very thing!

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.

4. The next three verses contrast the “fool” with the “wise” man. Under each verse below write in the characteristic of both people:

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

The “fool” –

The “wise” -

Proverbs 26:12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

The “fool” –

The “wise” -

Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

The “fool” –

The “wise” -

5. What’s your biggest take away from today’s verses?

DAY 5: Danger #2: Waywardness

1. Just because we are saved doesn't mean we won't sin or won't be tempted to sin. That will happen every day. There is still the propensity in even the saved person to wander away from God, to still be wayward. Thankfully, God's grace is the bottom line, both in our salvation and our sanctification!

2. Waywardness is one of the characteristics of sheep, and it is characteristic of us. This should not surprise us, nor discourage us. God will be working on this all our lives.

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has gone his own way ...

3. Besides a sheep, the bible also compares us to two other animals:

Psalms 32:9 Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

a. When you think about controlling a horse, what comes to mind?

b. When you think about a mule, what characteristics come to mind?

4. Have you ever wondered if God hasn't put a bit in your mouth and a bridle around your neck?

5. The admonition is clear in v. 9. So are the consequences of stubbornly refusing to follow God. What strikes you from v. 10?

6. What is your biggest takeaway from today's verses?