

More on Training in Guidance

thoughts on Acts 13:1-5

A lot of us are curious as to what direction to take in life. What am I here for? Who am I to marry? What sort of job should I get? Where does God want me to live? What house does God want me to purchase? I need another car; should I even ask God for one, or does this lie outside his interest for my life? A lot of life is about the decisions we are called to make. Looking for guidance from God, though, is not the first place to start as far as training in godliness goes. The essential training is in solitude, imitating Jesus and the apostles here; getting alone with just you, God, and his Word. The next kind of training we should all engage in is learning to meditate, to hear God speak not just generally, but to our hearts and minds, praying back the Scriptures to him; to become totally aware that God is right there, that in fact God is in us. The next kind of training is in prayer, abandoning ourselves to the will of God, surrendering completely to him. So looking for guidance will lead us to train ourselves in other ways first.

Do we want to receive guidance? We'll get it mostly from his Word. His Word won't tell WHO to marry, but will tell us the kind of person we should be looking for, not so much in terms of how good looking the person is, but in terms of character and godliness. His Word won't tell us WHAT KIND OF WORK we should do, but it will tell us that whatever we do, we should do it as though working for God, not for people; and that same Word will tell us that God's kingdom is about making the world a better place; so what should my career be then? His Word won't tell us WHERE TO LIVE, but it will tell us that he's placed us where we are on purpose, and unless he makes it clear in some other way, we should not move; unless he opens a door somewhere else and closes the door where we're at now, we should stay put. His Word won't tell us how and where to spend our money, but it will tell us that the love of money is the root of all evil, and that riches are no guarantee for entrance into his kingdom.

Do we want to be led by the Spirit? One place where the Bible speaks of being led by the Spirit is Romans 8. If we're children of God, we can expect to be led by the Spirit. Where will the Spirit lead us? He will expose to our eyes those sins we don't even know we commit. He'll lead us to see the nasty areas of our lives. And by the Spirit we'll learn to put to death those sinful tendencies. And by the Spirit those sinful tendencies will be replaced with something more useful, something that will greatly benefit others and ourselves. Do we really want to be led by the Spirit? Then we need to get to those nasty places in our characters that he wants to transform; and this will involve some pain and sacrifice.

I was speaking with someone the other day, and he was telling how amazing it is that God gives him books to read that are exactly where he is at. Someone else told me of a book he'd tried to read before, but couldn't get into then; but now he is ready to hear it. His Spirit leads us to the right books at the right time, drawing our attention to things we would have missed otherwise. So when our eye catches a certain book, maybe God is leading us to read it.