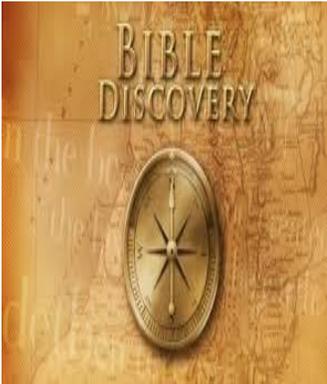


May 17, 2015

Jeremiah 29:10-14

Focused on God's Direction



God loves to do astounding things! Often what God is doing is in response to the prayers of His people and so it's good to pray and to seek God's perfect direction. In fact God always answers prayer – sometimes He says yes, sometimes He calls for us to wait, and sometimes He rejects our suggestions. I love the T-shirt that says, "Rejection is God's way of saying Wrong Direction!" Isn't God good? Dr. David Jeremiah has said, "Asking God is not only a good place to start, it is the only place to start! I have never understood why anyone would come to me before approaching the Creator of the universe. After all, God has a blueprint plan of our lives, written in the palm of His hand. 'See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me' [Isaiah 49:16]."

That's why I believe being focused on God's direction is no mere game, no easy solution, not only a matter of surrender though surrender we must; but rather it's the ultimate in life's adventure. Yes, following God's direction includes trouble, trials, and tragedy...but it also includes the problem-solver and the God of all comfort, our Saviour. That's because there's a "you-shaped hole" in God's eternal plan. Into that reservoir God has prepared good things specifically for you to do. It's true - God's direction for your life can be frightening. Questions such as,



"How do we hear God's voice?"

"Will He make me do something I detest?"

"How do I know it's God calling me?"

There has certainly been a lot of books written purporting to understand what God's direction is for life – *some better than others*. Our first priority however is to know **God's Sovereign Will** applies universally to all believers. Clearly it's God's will that *"all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"* [1Timothy 2:4]. Then as believers we're *"to be conformed to the image of His Son"* [Romans 8:29]; our lives *"transformed by the renewing of our minds"* [Romans 12:2]. We're taught these things from His Word, the Bible, to help us do the things that please our Lord.

A Specific Plan

However our Lord also has a specific plan for your life which differs from anyone else's. To understand God's direction for you, you need to dig deep into your heart and answer 3 simple questions...

**When God opens
a door – walk
through it; when
God closes a
door; don't pry it
open!**

- 1) ***Is it Scriptural?*** (Does it align with God's written Word?)
- 2) ***Is it your heart's desire?*** (Have you a passion and longing to pursue the work?)
and
- 3) ***Is there a need?*** (For instance in Mt Brydges where it's a middle-class bedroom community to London, what benefit would be found in running a soup kitchen for the homeless? They'd need transportation to get out here! However, consider the benefits of providing tutoring to elementary school students whose parents are both working thus providing a place to go and much needed assistance?)

If the answer's **"No"** to any of these questions, then it's not God's direction for you. But let me give you this advice: when God opens a door – walk through it; when God closes a door; don't pry it open; and don't ever forget that His grace is sufficient for whatever may come. That's a promise! Unfortunately these questions

offer no set formula – the **“do A, B and C and you’ll have success, and happiness and never know sorrow for ever and ever Amen!” formula** – There’s no miracle strategy to discover God’s direction for your life. But let me give you seven tips to help you see the big picture in understanding God’s plan for you.

- 1) **BIBLICAL GUIDANCE** - God will never ask us to do something contrary to His Word and His Word is thoroughly consistent. However, He also demands obedience within the Biblically clear aspects of our lives, and obedience to the life *we profess to have in Him*.
- 2) **THE OPINION & COUNSEL OF OTHERS** – Seek guidance from many of those whom you trust around you and recognize that maybe God is speaking through them.
- 3) **GIFTS & ABILITIES** - God has entrusted us with certain unique personal talents; how will we use them? Or will we squelch our gifts? Let God lead you through your abilities.
- 4) **OPPORTUNITIES & SITUATIONS** – Let events be seen in light of God’s leading. Our Lord uses us through our current circumstances so be enthusiastic of all situations and opportunities.
- 5) **PASSIONS & DESIRES** –What gets you out of bed and down the road at 5 a.m.? How do we answer the question “If I could do anything...”? Did you ever consider the still, small voice of God is encouraging you through that desire?
- 6) **INITIATIVE** - Taking steps of faith in direction we believe God has called us can help us affirm God’s will as He either redirects us or confirms the direction we take.
- 7) **MIRACULOUS MEANS** - angels, dreams, audible and visible signs, and prophecies are ways that God guided in the Scriptures and are ways He might guide us today. Don’t negate God’s miraculous intervention!

The Bible says we don’t have because we don’t ask. Therefore, we ought to ask Him for guidance. When you’re looking for God’s specific *“plan”* for your life begin with praying for God to show it to you. At the heart of your prayer, always remember who you are – He tells us, *“You were made by God and for God and until you understand that, life will never make sense.”* By prayerfully seeking direction, surrendering completely to Him, and listening attentively for His direction, what once seemed mysterious and out of focus will become amazingly clear. Then, as our focus on God’s direction becomes clearer, we’re told to be obedient. That requires we be willing to take action on the direction our Lord shows to us. Again, let me help you with getting started with an Action Plan for God’s direction in your life, but let me warn you – I do mean it includes **taking action!**



- 1) **ACCEPT “SMALL” AS SUCCESS** - Malcolm Muggeridge wrote, *“Christianity is not a statistical view of life. That there should be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over all the hosts of the just is an anti-statistical proposition.”* In other words, our little efforts do matter! What is God asking you to do to meet the need of your neighbour? How can you serve your family? What ministry can you provide through your church? For years I knew God wanted to use me in ministry yet until just recently many road blocks seemed to come my way. Some were of my own making, some were just life happening, but I was continually able to serve Jesus in whatever place I found myself simply by relying on Him. So can you.
- 2) **START WHERE YOU ARE** - Involvement in international ministries, serving other cultures in our communities, undertaking a new career in service, or developing a second language skill, even involving yourself in local ministries, can all take time and may require skills you’re not blessed with - yet. But God can use each of our efforts to prepare us for service right in our own backyard. When you go home today, look around and consider the great opportunities for showing compassion and understanding for the people around you. They may look a lot like you but each one has their own special need – how is God asking you to reach out and help them? And who are you willing to pray for? Have you believed God’s Word when it says to *“pray without ceasing”*? There’s power in the prayer of a persistent believer who doesn’t know the meaning of the word, *“quit”*. There’s the story of a Mr. and Mrs. Anderson in the U.S.

who each night as they watched the network news together decided this could be their ministry. They listened to the news, took special note of international reports, and during commercial breaks, (turning down the volume) they prayed together for the country or the issue that was cited asking the Lord to actively intervene.

- 3) **DO NOT DELAY** – Many of you will leave here today saying something along the lines of, “*These are good ideas. I’ll have to try them out some day when I have the time.*” But we can’t ever find out how God might use us through procrastination. If we’re to grow in our vision of God, His world, and our part in it, we need to make it a priority. **We need to start today!** First we submit ourselves daily to the Lordship of Jesus Christ recognizing we belong to Him — “*bought with a price*” [1 Corinthians 6:20] — then we’ll grow in our ability to see the world as He sees it. Our desire to understand and care for our world will arise out of our relationship with Jesus. Dr. Ralph Winter, the founder of the U.S. Center for World Mission, stated, “Nothing that does not occur daily will ever dominate your life.” So our work for Christ must not only begin now, but must be exercised daily. If we don’t start now opening ourselves to God as His *Living Sacrifices*, we may never hear Him call us into an exciting opportunity to serve Him and if we don’t do it daily, it will never happen.

To quote Dr. Jeremiah once again, he tells us, “God our Heavenly Father, loving Counselor, peace-giving Friend, and gentle Shepherd is laden with gifts that will change our lives. However, we must be prayerfully attentive to the direction He has for us and to discern the path He has chosen from the one we have chosen for ourselves.”

What I’m saying is we must decide that it’s time for action; we must decide that we truly want to focus on God’s direction for our lives and are willing to pursue that direction *whatever the cost*. Jesus speaks of that cost as He tells the parable of the man who found a priceless pearl and *when he had found it, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.* [Matthew 13:45] Again, Jesus refers to the kingdom of heaven – our ultimate pursuit and direction for sure which our Lord has promised to those who remain focused on God’s direction – saying its “*like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*” [Matthew 13:44]

What distractions, road blocks and “other good things” – what costs - come up in our lives and send us off course from focusing on God’s direction? Many times we label the very things that stop us as “sound reasoning”, “common sense” or “rationale” – never supposing we’re missing out on the great joy our Lord has for us as we follow His direction. But if we hold firm to God’s purpose for our lives – remain focused – we discover that we’re empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish all God lays upon our hearts and much more.

I submit to you that if you’re willing to focus your life on living according to God’s perfect direction for your life, you’ll discover at least three amazing facts...

- 1) First, while your own plan may allow you to succeed humanly speaking with education, wealth, even recognition, only God’s plan for your life will bring you peace, joy, fulfillment – and a wonderful sense of adventure and accomplishment. This cartoon says it well when it comes to the world’s view of success – The young lady holds up her diploma saying, “*I thought this came with a life plan*”. Her friend responds having studied the diploma – “*It doesn’t!*” Conversely, Jesus Himself demonstrated the joy He found even in the cross knowing it was all in His Father’s plan to save us from our sins and He lived in the confidence and the courage of that understanding without regret.



- 2) Secondly, because we focus on “things” – possessions and a store house of security – in other words, worldly pursuits – we fail to experience God’s direction in our lives. Our failure to yield our possessions is

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- Dr. David Jeremiah

our downfall because if there's anything you own which you can't give up, in truth, you don't own it, it owns you! At Matthew 25:21 Jesus explains, if God doesn't get your attention on the 'one-talent' propositions in life, you'll never get a chance at the ten talent ones! We must let Jesus deal with our sinful nature accepting, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" [Isaiah 53:6]. Let's face it; the 'self-made man' usually worships himself! And in the end has little to show for it being the poorest of gods.

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- 3) Finally, we must place our trust in the Lord. Whom do you trust? Is there a person in your life with whom you would trust your very life, if necessary? A spouse...a parent...a sibling...a very good friend? Think about that person. And then realize that **God loves you** infinitely more than that person with whom you would trust your life! And it's God alone who has a plan for your life. That is what Jeremiah has to say to us. "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" [Jeremiah 29:11]

**It is
possible
to LOCK onto the
direction God has
for YOUR life!**



God's petition upon each of us is to hear from Him and desire to follow Him with all our heart, soul, body and mind. It is possible to lock onto the direction God has for your life. But first we must *seek Him, and find Him, with all our heart.* That means not only putting God first, but making Him and His will your priority. It means willingly giving back to God everything – your dreams, your talents, your comfort, your family, and your plans. Then the Lord promises, "I will be found by you!" When the Lord shows the path for you to follow, then trust Him and His plan with all your heart. Charge down that path with all you've got. Pursue His direction with a passion. You'll quickly find there's no more fulfilling, peaceful, and thankful place to be in this life than soundly focused on God's direction.

To speak with someone today about what it means to lock into the saving grace of Christ and to KNOW GOD'S DIRECTION for your life, give us a call at 1-519-317-8659 at Mt Brydges Baptist Church or send an email through this website.

*God Bless,
Pastor Dave*