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PLANNING



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How not to Plan

1

Do not ignore the general Bible teaching.

2

Do not pray just for God's endorsement on your plans.

3

Do not be like the horse or the donkey.

4

Do not depend on your strength/substance.

5

Do not wait for all questions to be answered.

6

Do not despise closed doors.

7

Do not over-consult people.

8

Do not bypass common sense.

9

Do not expect a smooth passage.

10

Do not depend on past guidance.



How not to Plan

Introduction

- Salvation means coming under a “new management.”

Christ is received not only as our “Saviour”
but also our “Lord.”

The first question of Paul after conversion:
“Lord, what will You have me to do?”
(Acts 9:6)

Our planning should be according to God’s will —

It’s a serious matter —

Will of God is “eternal” in nature:

Mt 7:21 ... *Kingdom of Heaven ... will of My Father*
1 Jn 2:17 ... *will of God ... abides forever.*

Doing God’s will is not an earthly option,
but an eternal obligation.

- Life is full of choices and decisions:
They make us or break us!

Wrong choices lead to confusion and chaos
— at times irreversible damage.

For God’s people,
the choice is not between “good” and “bad”
but “good” and “better.”

- Planning is vital and crucial to life:
If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.

- When we make a mistake in planning, it affects not only us, but also all those with whom we relate —

Parents — Family
Pastor — Congregation
Manager — Institution
President — Country

But wise planning brings in abundant blessings —

Prov 24:3,4 ... *wisdom ... understanding ...*

knowledge ... a house is built ...

Wrong decisions will not only ruin our life on earth,
but also our destiny.

How not to Plan

1. Do not ignore the general Bible teaching.

- The most basic truth in finding God's will —

“God's Word is God's will!”

If we neglect the reading and study of God's Word,
we will certainly miss God's will —

Psa 119:105 ... *lamp ... light ...*

:133 ... *direct my steps ...*

:165 ... *no stumbling ... great peace*

“*great peace*” = steadiness

confidence

no turbulence

- The Word of God is the will of God in **general** —

It is the basis to find God's will in **specific** —

- Moses tells people

Dt 4:1,6 ... *statutes ... judgments ... wisdom*

... understanding

- Moses tells Joshua

Josh 1:8,9 ... *Book of the Law ... your way ...*

- David tells Solomon

1 Ki 2:1-3 ... *His statutes ... commandments ... prosper*

- Five aspects of the Word of God (1 Ki 2:3) —

a) “*ways*” — life's journey

b) “*statutes*” — to engrave/inscribe

i.e. a decree/ordinance

- c) “*commandments*”— constitutional commands
for a Nation
eg) taking oath on the Bible
- d) “*judgments*”— discernment
- e) “*testimonies*”— to be repeated as witnessing in the
court of law — No change —
saying the same thing.

The result —

1 Ki 4:29 ... *God gave Solomon the wisdom*

■ Jesus in His own life —

a) At Incarnation

Heb 10:7 ... *In the volume of the Book ...*

b) Leaving Nazareth for Naphtali

Mt 4:12-16 ... A Scripture and a circumstance

■ Paul & Barnabas

Acts 13:46,47 ... A Scripture and a situation

■ Jerusalem Council

Acts 15:14,15,17,19

Restoration of the *Tabernacle* not only for Israel

but also for the “*gentiles!*”

■ Therefore,

only when we concentrate on the basic teaching of the Scriptures,
we can understand God’s will in specific situations —

- eg) Basic Mathematics and then specialised branches
- Basic sciences and then specialised branches

Interestingly, the Bible is both —

Isa 8:19,20 ... “*Teaching*” + “*Testimony*”
(law) (lives)

The Holy Spirit never guides us contrary to the Holy Scriptures.

- While studying the Bible,
 don't simply pray, "**Show** me Your will"
 but, "*Teach me to **DO** Your will.*" (Psa 143:10)

The **entrance** of God's Word gives light —
 Psa 119:130— "understanding/clarity"
 "*entrance*" into our minds/thoughts
 When we don't know what to do!

- Here lies the importance of regular, daily, systematic meditation of the Scriptures —
 Psa 1:1,2 ... A freshness and fruitfulness in him makes him
 "*prosper in all his **ways***" (vv 3,4)

"*Daily*" meditation — A general passage
 becomes a personal message:
 May be a warning ...
 May be an example ...

- The need for Bible memorisation —
 Psa 40:8 ... *I delight to do Your will ...*
Your law in my heart
 The Holy Spirit will "*remind*" us of the appropriate words.
 (Jn 14:26)

Use a Bible Reading Calendar to read through the Bible
 within a period of one year or two years.

How not to Plan

2. Do not pray just for God's endorsement on your plans.

■ Ezek 14:4,5

— God lets us go according to the **idols** in our heart.
“*idols*” = That which we admire and adore

Ambitions and aspirations can be there;
but these must be committed to the Lord —

Psa 37:5 ... “*commit your way to the Lord*”
i.e. stay unbiased.

■ We don't go to God for endorsement or counter-signature!

We must wait before Him
so He would write His will on our minds.

Phil 2:13 ... He implants *desires*.
Prov 3:5,6 ... *lean not ... acknowledge...*

There's nothing wrong in expressing our desires, but —

Mt 26:39 ... “*Nevertheless not as I will, but ...*”
:42 ... “*If ... unless I drink it ... Your will ...*”

When we make this sort of commitment,

God will “strengthen” us to do His will —
Lk 22:43 ... *an angel ... strengthening Him ...*

Look at Christ's boldness after that —

— Jn 18:4 ... “*Whom are you seeking?*”
“*I am He!*” (3 times) vv 5,6,8
— “*Shall I not drink?*” (v11)

Read the rest of the 18th chapter of John —

The “*Lamb*” of God is now the “*Lion*” of Judah!

- Secret desires hinder us from finding God’s perfect will —

eg) Prophet Balaam (Num 22)

— First time (v12) ... **Perfect** will of God

— Second time (vv 15,17) ... “*more*” offer

Prayer: “*what more*” (v19)

Permissive will (v20)

God’s “*anger*” (v22)

“*Your*” way is *perverse* (v32)

Comment in the NT: His heart was after money

Jude 11 — greed ... profit ... error

eg) When God has already blessed you with a good job,
stay satisfied and serve Him as much as you can.

Beware of “*more*” attractive offers!

Ask yourself these questions —

a) Do I really need more?

b) Will I need to sacrifice

my devotional time and family time?

c) Have I fulfilled God’s will in and around

where I am already placed?

- Too many plans and desires clash in our minds,
but *the “counsel” of the Lord alone will stand* —

Prov 19:21

— Remember God knows our plans —

We cannot manipulate things without His knowledge —

Isa 29:15 ... *woe to those who hide from the Lord*

— God is against a life that's overwhelmed
with self-designed plans.

The very next chapter: Isa 30:1

This is adding "*sin to sin*"

The "sin of sins" (Isa 53:6) ... "*our own ways*"

— Dare not "counsel" God!

Rom 11:34,35 ... *Who ... Who ... Who can?*

Don't give lectures and explanations to God!

— Even when we want to "find" God's will,

what's our intention —

just to "know" or to "do" God's will?

Jn 7:17 ... *If anyone wants to **do** ... he shall **know**...*

Col 1:9,10 ... will ►► walk ►► work

■ Early Christian life:

Praying to find God's will

Mature Christian life:

Praying according to God's will

with the help of the Spirit — Rom 8:26,27

How not to Plan

3. Do not be like the horse or the donkey.

- Looks funny, but this is the Bible teaching —
Psa 32:8,9 ... *“horse ... mule ... instruct ... teach ...
guide ... eye”*
A gentle way of guidance —
“with My eye”
i.e. just a “wink” and not a “whip”
— Keep looking at the eyes of the Master
Psa 123:2 ... *eyes of the servants ... our eyes to the Lord*
Don't be in a “hurry”
“until He has mercy on us!”
- In specific matters God leads us primarily through
His Holy Spirit in this dispensation —
Rom 8:14 ... *led by the Spirit ... sons ...*
In the first page of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is portrayed
as a mother bird hovering over its nest — Gen 1:2
Similarly, on the opening pages of the NT,
the Spirit descends on Jesus like a “dove” — Mt 3:16
Look at the combination: “dove”—gentlest of birds
(Jn 1:36) “lamb”—gentlest of animals
- God's Spirit “guides” us — does not “control” us
 - Garden of Eden: God respected His image on man
by letting Adam choose (Gen 2:16,17)
 - Noah's time: *My Spirit shall not always strive ...*
Gen 6:3/Isa 57:16

- David was a man after God’s own heart;
*he did the **will of God** in his generation* (Acts 13:36)

It was because he was in deep appreciation of
God’s “gentleness”

2 Sam 22:36 ... *Your gentleness made me great ...*

In the very next verse, he speaks about “*path*” and “*feet*” (v37)

- Do not always look for a dramatic guidance —

- Prophet Elijah

1 Ki 19:11,12 ... *“NOT in wind ... quake ... fire ...”*

But there was “*fire*” in the previous chapter!

Mount Carmel (18:38,39)

- Similarly, Apostle Paul’s conversion was dramatic,
but the guidance was simple —

Acts 9:3-6 ... An ordinary disciple (not even an apostle)
would come and tell him what to do! (v17)

- Dramatic guidance is exceptional,
not normal —

God guides us like a Father (Hos 11:3,4)

“arms ... gentle cords ... bands of love ... lift off the yoke!”

— What a picture!

- There were , “*rushing wind*”
and “*fiery tongues*” in Acts 2;
but not in Acts 10 ... House of Cornelius
or Acts 19 ... Ephesus disciples
- How I decided for fulltime Christian ministry:
 - a) A desire planted by God
— to invest life in His cause

b) An understanding of God's mind
from His Word (no *bridle*, but Bible!)
— regular meditation

c) A gentle whisper of the Holy Spirit
No flashy vision ... No audible voice ...

■ The one condition:

Stay broken ...

Remain flexible ...

In the OT, God wrote on *tablets of stone*

In the NT, He writes on *hearts of flesh* (2 Cor 3:3)

Don't be stiff or stubborn,
but be soft and surrendered!

How not to Plan

4. Do not depend on your strength/substance.

- Someone said,

When you have money, you pay ...

When you don't have money, you pray ...

- If we plan our life according to what “we” have, there's no place for faith.

eg) It was in order to teach this lesson

Jesus sent His disciples (Mt 10:9,10)

without “*moneypurse*” — Monetary strength

or “*sandals and staffs*” — Self-protection:

sandals from thorns; staffs from thieves

After they learnt the lesson,

He asked them to take not only “*moneybag*”

but also “*sword!*” (Lk 22:35,36)

- God usually **empties** us before **filling** us!

eg) Moses —

His life: First 40 years—He was somebody(Acts 7:22,23)

Next 40 years — He was nobody (vv 29,30)

Final 40 years — God was everything (Dt 34:7)

With his own strength,

he buried one Egyptian in sand;

but when God emptied him and filled him

with His strength,

he could sink an entire army in the sea!

When Moses was 40, **he** went (Acts 7:23)

When he was 80, **God** sent him (v35)

We don't learn this lesson overnight —

Moses took 40 years to learn this precious truth.

- Natural strength opposes the Spirit's power to lead us —

Rom 8:12-14 ... *flesh ... Spirit ... led ...*

eg) Jacob **wrestled** with God in his strength;

when God crippled him, he **clinged** on to God

(Gen 32:22-30)

True strength is in restfully waiting on God —

Isa 30:15-18 ... *rest ... quietness ... horses ...*

- We must not depend on our substance also.

That's why James specifically addresses the "business" people while talking about the will of God — Js 4:13-5:1

"If it is the will of God ..."

"If we are alive ..."

Lesson: We just cannot understand God's will

if we depend on our substance or strength.

Attachment to the things of the world usually makes doing God's will difficult.

eg) Abraham — Towers vs. Tents (Heb 11:9,10)

Buildings can become stumbling blocks in following God's leading.

Winston Churchill: We shape our buildings;

finally the buildings shape us.

A point to the youngsters —

Choosing a course of study according to “God’s will,”
or availability of huge funds to pay as capitation fee?

- Several servants of God have missed God’s “perfect will”
in their lives when they didn’t know what to do with
huge sums of money left over after meeting all their expenses.
Instead of asking God to show them His will,
they invent projects and schemes outside God’s will for them.

— The inevitable result will be sidetracking
and misleading God’s people.

How not to Plan

5. Do not wait for all questions to be answered.

- It's normally said —

Don't take any risk.

Don't move until you have all the details.

This philosophy is opposed to the Bible teaching on "faith"—
God's will is that we move forward with whatever light
we already have —

Prov 4:18 ... *twilight to noonlight*

eg) John Newman, a Church leader of the
18th Century in England

— While on board a ship in the Mediterranean
his vessel was caught up in storm and utter darkness.

At that time he composed the world-famous hymn —

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom

Lead Thou me on;

The night is dark, and I am far from home;

Lead Thou me on;

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see...

The distant scene; — one step enough for me!

Unfortunately this hymn is sung mostly in funeral
services only—

This hymn is not for the dead

but for the living!

Pray: "One step enough for me, Lord!"

— A classic example:

Abraham

Gen 12:1 ... *To **a** land I **will** show you!*

Heb 11:8 ... **not** knowing where!

He did not wait for the details.

Otherwise there's no thrill! No adventure!

- A wrong teaching prevalent today —

With a renewed emphasis on prophesying,
some preachers promise that they would pray
and obtain a “blueprint” for people’s life and ministry—

God does **not** give us a blueprint;

He gives only a “compass!”

eg) Paul had only a general knowledge of
persecutions that awaited him —

Acts 20:22,23 ... *Jerusalem ... not knowing ...*

- When we move on with whatever God has shown us,
even if we make a mistake —

A crisis: Isa 30:20a *“adversity ... affliction”*

A little light: :20b *“eyes ... teachers”*

Voice of correction: :21 *“ears ... left ... right”*

- Only as we keep **doing** what God has taught us in general,
we can understand His specific will —

Lk 12:43 ... *found **doing** ...*

That's the Master's will (v47)

Don't be idle — doing nothing — in the name of waiting!

— If you waste time, you will not understand God's will

Eph 5:15-17 ... *wise... redeem time... will of the Lord*

— Keep busy with whatever your hand finds to do (Eccl 9:10)

eg) King Hezekiah 2 Chr 31:20,21
“good ... right ... true ... prospered ...”

The teaching in the NT:

Rom 12:2 ... “good ... acceptable ... perfect will of God”

- God’s footsteps may not be known at times,
but He still leads —

Psa 77:19,20 ... *Your way ... sea ... footsteps ... waters*
He may lead thro’ spiritual leaders like “Moses & Aaron”

- Certain eternal truths

- a) Our times are in God’s hands.

Psa 31:14,15 ... “Therefore I trust in You!”

- b) God only knows the end from the beginning.

Isa 46:10 ... “Therefore His **counsel** shall stand ...”

- c) God reveals His will only in stages,
because we cannot take them all at a time —
They are too high to be understood.

Isa 55:8,9 ... *Higher Ways ... Higher Thoughts*

Do not wait for all questions to be answered,
or all details to be obtained!

Spending time on too many options will lead us to
“doublemindedness” —

Js 1:8 ... *unstable in **all** his **ways**.*

How not to Plan

6. Do not despise closed doors.

- It's a wrong notion that
all open doors are God's providence; and
all closed doors are the devil's interference or hindrance.

The truth —

It's God who opens doors; and it's God who closes doors.

OT: Isa 22:22

NT: Rev 3:7

The question: **Who** has the **key**?

It's with God!

As long as the key is there,

what difference does it make? !!!

- God works through closed doors also —
eg) Jesus after resurrection (Jn 20:19)

Jesus Himself is the "Door!"

Because we are generally self-willed,

God leads us more through closed doors than thro' open doors!

— It's a pagan understanding that

God is a God of "*hills*" and not "*valleys*" ...

1 Ki 20:23,28

— God dwells not only in "*unapproachable light*,"

but also in utter *darkness* ...

Light: 1 Tim 6:16

Darkness: 1 Ki 8:12... "*The Lord Himself said...*"

— God is a God of both “day & night”

Psa 74:16 ... *The day is Yours ... the night ... Yours*

In fact, the night comes **first** in creation (Gen 1:5,8,13)

— Can the guard of a train guide with “green” flag only;
does he not need the “red” flag also?

We need to have a strong & practical understanding
of this “**balanced**” view about God.

■ An open door may not be always God’s will for us —

□ Jonah: Nineveh or Tarshish?

The ship was ready for Tarshish! (Jon 1:2,3)

□ Even in identical instances,

God changes His methods of guidance:

Abraham — famine — He went to Egypt (Gen 12:10)

Isaac— God stopped him from going to Egypt(26:1,2,6,12)

■ A classic example of how God alternates between
“open” doors and “closed” doors for guidance —

Acts 16:6-8 ... Asia (closed) ▶ Bithinia (closed) ▶ Troas

2 Cor 2:12,13,14 ... **Open** door in Troas ▶ Macedonia

Result: Conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:14)

Conversion of Jailer (Acts 16:33,34)

■ Praise God for closed doors!

If God does not close some doors for us,

we will fall in for every open door—

Several open doors may be traps for us!

■ Do not think that open doors will be free from problems
either —

1 Cor 16:9 ... *great ... effective door ... many adversaries*

- Many times, it is in “closed-door-situations”
that God manifests His power in greater measure —
Isa 45:2,3 ... *bronze ... iron ... darkness ...*
- When the situation is too ambiguous,
there is nothing wrong in asking God to close doors
which are not His will.
— This is what I normally do.
- Remember also what Jesus taught about
“broadway” vs. “narrow gate” —
Mt 7:13,14

How not to Plan

7. Do not over-consult people.

- Receiving counsel from elders and experienced persons is actually encouraged in the Bible —

Prov 11:14 ... *“multitude” of counsellors*

What is stressed here is that we must not overlook or reject counsel totally —

“no counsel”

It is always safe to consult others in major matters; but consulting too many people will actually confuse us.

Why?

The ungodly outnumber the godly in the world.

Broadway vs. Narrow Gate (Mt 7:13,14)

That’s why we are to be extremely careful

in choosing our friends (Prov 12:26)

... choose friends carefully ... leads astray

The very first line of the very first Psalm warns against

*“ungodly **counsel**”* Psa 1:1

eg) Pharaoh & Egypt (Isa 30:1,2)

... counsel ... plans ... Egypt ... Pharaoh

- Even among believers,
“carnal” Christians outnumber “spiritual” Christians!
Phil 3:18,19 ... *many walk ... earthminded ...*
- Not all those who call themselves as servants of God can be trusted;
because “false” prophets are simply too “many” —

- Jesus said so:
 - Mt 7:15,22 ... *false prophets ... many ...*
 - Beginning of His ministry (Sermon on the Mount)
 - Mt 24:11 ... *many false prophets ...*
 - Towards the end of His ministry (Olivet Discourse)
- Apostle John said so:
 - 1 Jn 4:1 ... *many false prophets ...*

■ Let's take some examples to illustrate this truth —

- Jesus to His relatives (brothers) Jn 7:2-6
 - Jesus to His senior disciple Mt 16:21-23
 - Paul after conversion did **not** go to Jerusalem...Gal 1:15-19
 - lest the Gospel of Grace be diluted!
 - Paul — Agabus — Philip's 4 daughters
 - Acts 21:8-14 ... "*will of the Lord*"
 - Who was right? Of course, Paul (See Acts 23:11)
- Learn to differentiate between Information and Instruction.

■ Some negative examples —

- Gibeonites and Joshua
 - Josh 9:3,4a,8,9,14 Treaty with Gibeonites
 - because of attractive offers!
- A man of God and an old Prophet
 - 1 Ki 13:14b-19,24,26 ... *delivered to the lion*

■ Beware of "other" voices!

Jn 10:4,5 ... *sheep ... voice of strangers*

The primary guidance must be from the Lord
thro' the Scriptures and His Spirit only —

Consultations are only secondary —
otherwise we will go astray —

Prov 19:27 ... *instruction ... words of knowledge*

- Beware of those who bring pressure on you to manipulate you!

The apostles were **gentle** ...

1 Cor 16:12,14 ... *Apollos ... love ...*

1 Thess 2:7 ... *nursing mother ...*

How not to Plan

8. Do not bypass common sense.

- Common sense has become uncommon!
When common sense makes sense,
don't look for any other sense!
- A wrong concept:
When we commit our lives to Christ
we must stop thinking by ourselves!

But the Biblical teaching: Rom 12:2
“perfect will” — Not removal, but renewal of mind
When we commit ourselves to Christ,
we receive **sanctified** common sense!
- Common sense is God-given to each man —
Rom 2:14,15 ... *nature ... hearts ... conscience ... thoughts*
— A sense of discernment
even without the Law of God

God laments when people don't use their common sense —
Jer 49:7 ... *counsel perished ... wisdom vanished*

When we don't use our common sense,
we will be enslaved to meaningless customs,
traditions and practices —
Isa 5:13a ... *knowledge ... captivity ...*
Hos 4:6 ... *knowledge ... destroyed ...*
- Jesus' frequent appeal to common sense —

eg) Mt 18:12 ... *What do you think? ... 100 sheep*

21:28 ... *What do you think?*

Lk 14:28-31 ... *Count the cost*

“Estimate”

(Building or Battling)

Faith vs. Presumption!

- The apostles also appealed to common sense —

1 Cor 11:14 ... *nature teach ... long hair for men*

An example of how they used common sense for logical guidance in ministry —

Phil 2:19-28

“... For ... therefore ... yet ...”

- How to refine our common sense —

- a) By asking God (Js 1:5)

He grants us common sense —

eg) Isa 28:27-29 ... *cummin ... cartwheel*

- b) By reading the Wisdom Books of the Bible —

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes ...

Especially Proverbs —

31 chapters... 1/day

For flushing out and filling in (couplets)

Prov 1:4,5 ... a) To *simple* ... who know nothing

b) To *youth* ... who know something

c) To *wise* ... who know more

d) To *understanding* ... who know a lot

i.e. for all sections

The promise: Prov 2:11 ... **“Discretion preserves you!”**

- Another word for “discretion” —
“discernment”

How to get it —

- a) An art to be developed (Heb 5:14)

By exercise

- b) A gift to be desired (1 Cor 12:10)

Even if someone prophesies,

it must be discerned (1 Cor 14:29)

— even if it’s a collective voice

How not to Plan

9. Do not expect a smooth passage.

- When we follow God's leading in our lives,
we can be assured that —
 - the landing will be safe,
 - but the passage may not be smooth;
 - it may be quite turbulent.
- Jesus: *Let's go to the other side ... storm* (Mk 4:35-40)
With Christ in the vessel, we can smile at the storm!
- It was Jesus who bid Peter to come to Him
walking on water,
but *he began to sink* (Mt 14:26-30)
- God's ways are usually in the storm —
 - Nah 1:3b ... *whirlwind ... storm*
 - I have received classic and outstanding guidance
for my life and ministry mostly while going thro' crises!
- Paul's testimony about his missionary journeys —
 - 2 Cor 2:14 ... *triumph in every place*
 - But how was the passage?
2 Cor 11:24-27 ... *perils ... perils ... perils ...*
 - This he does not list out as a complaint,
but he testifies for God's "*praise and glory*" (v31)
 - eg) Paul's voyage to Rome —
 - A journey undertaken after
much "*prayer and by the will of God*" — Rom 1:10

But how was the voyage? Acts 27:22-26

— Even though an angel approved and assured (v23)

- The path into the Kingdom of God is not red-carpeted, but is marked by “*many tribulations*” —

Acts 14:21,22

- The famous Psalm 23 —

v3b ... “*He leads me ...*”

v4a ... “*valley of the shadow of death*”

This is the meaning of —

“*suffering according to the will of God*”

1 Pet 4:19 ... keep “*doing good ...*”

Don’t be looking for “favourable climate” —

Eccl 11:4 ... “*sow*” ... beginning

“*reap*” ... finishing

- What about the saying —

“God’s men doing God’s work in God’s time
in God’s way will not lack God’s support?”

This is only a **general** observation
about God’s **ultimate** help!

He allows difficulties —

eg) Gideon and Midianites

Judges 6:3,4 ... destroying the crops

:12 ... “*The Lord with you!*”

:13 ... *If the Lord is with us ...*

:14 ... *Go!*

How not to Plan

10. Do not depend on past guidance.

- God's guidance is always perfect;
but it will differ from time to time.
eg) David and his war against Philistines —
2 Sam 5:19 ... "Go **straight against** them"
:22,23 ... "Go **around behind** them"
David was thus habituated to make **fresh** enquiries
of the Lord —
That's why: *A man after God's own heart* ... (Acts 13:22
Did God's will in his generation ... :36)
- Another classic example from the OT —
Hagar the bond woman of Abraham
In the first instance,
God tells her to *return to Sarah* (Gen 16:6-9)
In the next instance,
God Himself tells Abraham to *send her away*
(Gen 21:9-13)
- Not only individuals but also the company of God's people
were led differently at different times —
Pillar of cloud & Pillar of fire in the wilderness (Ex 40:38)
When they entered the Promise Land,
it was the "*Word*" (Josh 1:8)
Same is the case in Christian life —
At the beginning: Inspirations/impressions by the Spirit
(Because we don't know the Bible much)

When we mature: Discernment and guidance
from the written *WORD* (Heb 5:13,14)

□ Early years:

Rejoicing over privileges —

“*Forgiveness*” (1 Jn 2:12)

“*Fatherhood*” (:13c)

Later years/Mature years:

Realising the Responsibilities —

“*knowledge*” (vv 13a, 14a)

i.e. Walking according to this knowledge

□ Early years: God lets us do things as we please.

Later years: God puts restrictions.

eg) Peter (Jn 21:18)

□ Early years: God **calls** us to do this and that.

Mature years: He lets us **choose**.

■ Another aspect of this truth —

God’s guidance is in accordance to the light we’ve received:

Times of ignorance: Acts 17:30

(We all have this!)

Progressive revelation: Heb 1:1,2

■ There’s always some “teaching” associated

with God’s “leading” — (Psa 32:8)

To take us from one lesson to the other,
God changes His leading.

Just like a day has both light and darkness,

our life has various seasons —

Eccl 3:1-8

God's leading is according to the Season —

(v11a) ... *"beautiful in its time!"*

(v11b) ... *"no one can find out!"*

■ A word to those in the **ministry**:

God's guidance varies from people to people
to whom we minister —

eg) Going to Israelites: *"no moneybag"* (Mt 10:6,9,10)

Going to Gentiles: *"no collection"* (3 Jn 7)

■ Ours is a God of variety!

— Under the same circumstance, God does not lead
two persons alike!

That's why biographies and autobiographies
are only for general challenge and understanding.

— Each of God's children is different; but the goal is the same!

— We can learn from past experiences;
but they cannot become perfect guidance for us today!
