

Wings of Love Community Church

Divine Guidance

Learning the Skill of Following the Lord

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Session 1: Philosophy of Guidance

A. Foundation: Rom. 8:1.4-16 with II Tim. 3:1-16.

1. Ingredients of guidance are:
 - a. Vs. 16: Our (human) spirit.
 - b. Vs. 16: God's Holy Spirit.
 - c. Vs. 15: Fatherhood/Relational base.
 - d. Vs. 16: Need and necessity to be guided.
2. The issue is God's Holy Spirit enabling our human spirit to do God's known will and to be motivated to be a Father pleaser (In. 8:29).
3. Foundational truth is that although the Holy Spirit dwells in us (vs. 9) and leads us by an inward prompting; all His activities are guarded and guided by the outward, written **Word**.
4. Sons (maturity) verses children (vs. 14).
 - a. Rich motivation for growth and change.
 - b. Ingredient for an exciting life and fulfillment.
 - c. Guidance is a prerequisite to shaping our conduct and fulfilling our mission.
 - d. Fruit is a settled sense of security, knowing what He has to say and being aware of what He wants.

A. The question of final authority.

1. What is truth, and how is it to be known?
 - a. What is right, and why should I obey it?
 - b. Is there a "normal Christian life"?
2. Age of rebellion and questioning all authority.
 - a. Restlessness grows into revolt.
 - b. Tyranny, political and financial.
 - c. Tyranny that is religious is most formidable, most hateful, and least defensible.
3. Conflict and tension between *control* and *freedom*.
 - a. Thy Kingdom come (freedom), Thy will be done (control).
 - b. Our position: The Scripture reveals that we are under the authority of God and His Word. He is a *Father* who knows, wills, and loves us.
4. How we **view** the Scriptures.
 - a. "Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts" (Westminster Confession).
 - b. Without the self-revelation of God in the Scriptures, we can acknowledge no origins, find no guidance, and aim for no meaningful goal.

5. How we **use** the Scriptures.

- a. They are not a sword by which we cut off another's ability to hear (Matt. 26:51).
- b. God's love letter to His prospective bride, in both Old and New Testament.
 - 1) His expression of His moral and spiritual expectations and safeguards for the one He loves.
 - 2) God speaks "in many portions and in many ways" with a voice that seeks and finds us (Heb. 1:1).
 - 3) It does not follow that the voice is always welcome. It is a voice that threatens my personal sovereignty; God is holy and I am sinful.
 - 4) The initiative is with God. It is not that "I know" but I "am" known; I -.haven't been seeking, but I have been found. We love because He first loved us.
 - 5) Wandering, groping helplessly in my painful loneliness, His presence found me. He offered to be my Helper and Guide. I was not just ignorant, but sinful, rebellious, and self-willed.
 - 6) That voice of our Father not only commands, but entreats. He is not a slave master, but One inviting us home.
- 7) The Scriptures, then, include these seven things:
 - a) Objective and self-revealed: God's Word is His voice to us lest we be lost in our own wanderings. He caused to be written what He wants us to know, how He feels about things, and where He is going.
 - b) Redemptive: Everything God does is redemptive in its nature and purpose. It answers the questions I need to know in order to be saved, filled with love, and in possession of purpose and a philosophy of life.
 - c) Spiritual: God is a Spirit. The Scriptures are given for spiritual understanding of the Living God. They are personal, not legal or abstract.
 - d) Ultimate: They speak to all of life in every sphere. Properly grasped, they will order our whole existence. The joy and pleasure of God, His Christ, and His Spirit will rest upon you.
 - e) Universal: God loves all men everywhere. The love of God provides answers and direction for every person in every culture. The principles work for everyone in all ways.
 - f) Experience: From time to time we should carefully and boldly re-examine our personal experience by the Written Record. First to correct or adjust any extravagances, disfigurements, or aberrations. Second, to measure whether and to what degree the promises given have been made our own possession.
 - g) Final - not to be superseded: The Scriptures are the same yesterday, today, and forever. Self-attesting and self-vindicating authority that has never and will never be out-moded or obsolete. It is the one organic whole which constitutes the rule of faith and practice for God's own.

Notes:

Session 2: The Rusty Lock (*Obstacles to Being Guided*)

A. Inability to hear from God may be due to a wrong relationship (Jn. 8:47).

1. Original sin brought death to the human spirit (Gen. 2:17).
2. We may have incurred God's own displeasure Sam. 28:6).

B. Cultural restraint.

1. Our society is and has departed from its Christian and supernatural heritage.
 - a. More open and sensitive to the material realm and obvious forms of success.
 - b. Less open and sensitive to the spiritual dimension.
 - c. Secular and religious humanism has given us an anti-supernatural bias.
 - 1) Doubt, confession, loss of mystery.
 - 2) Absence of support in school, work, etc.
 - 3) Neurosis, despair, boredom, and schizoid manifestations.
 - d. False dilemma of having to choose between the spiritual and the natural.

C. Religious frigidity.

1. Early childhood trauma, extreme bigotry, and fanaticism leave us cold and unmoved.
 - a. The manner in which, as a child, Christ, the Church, and the Bible were taught and exemplified.
 - b. Adolescence which resulted in what might be termed "childhood vows."
 - 1) Unable to find release.
 - 2) Feeling of blockage, lack of power or satisfaction.
 - 3) Spiritual activity a Reading the Bible or being with other Christians can be tedious, and cause resentment or actual pain and anger.
 - c. Fear of opening to God or His Word, due to the fact: "I might act or be like that!"
 - d. "I can't" may really mean "I won't."
 - 1) Childhood will-power is strong and lasting.
 - 2) My fears have been reinforced by others' failures.
 - 3) I am afraid of deep, inner change.
 - 4) God reaches for our "unbelieving heart."

D. Continuous conversion (Phil. 3:1-16).

1. The Apostle Paul as our living example (Acts 26:14-20).
2. Difference between *reckless* and *risk*.
3. Conversion as a static, one-time experience.
4. Paul's example in Phil. 3:10-11.
5. *Risk* is what oils the rusty lock. It was to the believer that the invitation was given: "**Behold, I stand at the door (with the rusty lock) and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me**" (Rev. 3:20).

Notes:

Session 3: WHERE GOD AND MAN MEET

A. There are only three possible ways to come to God: Each of these, it seems, work for a while at the right time and place.

1. Self-interest: Seeking God because of personal need, fear of loss, or what we might gain.
2. Law: Religion is defined as externals and traditional means that we try to obey. Obedience is one of performance in order to be accepted and acceptable. The burden of law was the theme of Pauline epistles.
3. Love: Consummate revelation of God who came to us in the incarnation. God loved the world, so He came.

B. Understanding each of these may determine your success or failure in the skill of guidance:

1. Self-interest is the theme of our day.
 - a. "Get all you can and can all you get."
 - b. Provision and prosperity are side benefits of knowing God and effective guidance.
2. Law is presently a strange mixture, for we are in an anti-law posture, yet religious "laws" are proliferating.
 - a. Performance trap can be recognized.
 - b. We will and must see how we relate to obedience in the Lord.
3. Love means we finally comprehend that God set His love upon us. We can do nothing to earn that love, and mistakes and failures do not cause it to cease.
 - a. While we were yet (still) sinners, God set His love upon us.
 - b. God is big enough and wise enough to love you in your pain.
 - c. Recognize the difference between unworthy and unprofitable.

C. What it means to be in Christ (Eph. 1:3-7)

1. **Vicarious**: That which is accomplished in behalf of another (Matt. 27:26-27).
2. God, what do you think of me?
 - a. My morals, my community standing - rather than you, I would choose Barabbas.
 - b. My dominion, my authority - you are a fallen king, spit on him, slapped in open contempt.
 - c. My physical beauty, handsomeness - his physical beauty was marred more than any man.
 - d. My mind, my intellect - press thorns down around that mind infected with a curse.
 - e. My hands, to work for You - pierce them with nails, your good works unacceptable.
 - f. My feet, to go for You - pierce the feet that are prone to wander from truth.
 - g. My emotions, my love for You - pierce the heart of false emotions and let them drain out.
 - h. My humility - your humbleness is false. Strip him and put him to open shame. Expose the religious sham.
 - i. How is my acceptance to You, God - crucify him!
3. In my place - condemned He stood. He bore my iniquities. That **in Christ**, I might be acceptable to the Father.

D. Implications of Matt. 28:19-20 are most important.

1. In Christ, I am invited into fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. Eph. 2:18 diagrams how that fellowship is facilitated and enjoyed.
3. Working application on how to come into God's presence by choosing the path of love and knowing how to see ourselves *in Christ*.

Notes:

Session 4: A SKILL TO BE LEARNED

A. Guidance is learning to balance an exciting mixture of three necessary ingredients (I Sam. 3:1-7).

1. Understanding the instruction of God's Word.
2. Comprehending and interpreting the voice of the Holy Spirit
3. Perceiving the nature of the circumstances.

B. Often, guidance is presented as automatic or perhaps semi-automatic. This is most unfortunate.

1. At first, the believer does not want to walk in the Spirit, but rather be carried along the path to everlasting life.
2. Learning to be guided is one of the factors which produces two results:
 - a. The process of learning contributes to our maturity.
 - b. The result of learning how makes us to be profitable and useful in the Kingdom.

C. The three ingredients listed above are called the harbor lights.

1. Illustration of lining up the three lights to navigate the dangerous harbor.
2. We must grapple with the problems.

D. Use of God's written Word presents more variables than we would like to discuss.

1. How we interpret what it says.
2. How we apply what it says.
3. The manner in which we "received" this particular passage or verse.
4. While the Bible is the ultimate and final spiritual guide, it is not given to eliminate study, thought, discernment, and inquiry (Jer. 15:19).
5. Christ is the center and the circumference of the Scripture and its use. Therefore, we need to understand these three concepts:
 - a. Tenor of Scripture: The flow or general instruction which has a climate, use, or interpretation of the Bible that does not "go with the flow," should be suspect and carefully examined.
 - b. Exceptions as the rule: God sovereignly can and does make exceptional acts and illustrations to drive home His truth. Never make an exception, i.e. Hosea's marriage to a prostitute, to be the norm for godly behavior.
 - c. Private interpretation: The use of the Bible to "prove" various positions, interpretations, and unusual personal insights, i.e. "God showed me." While we do not deny God is able, we should be careful of private interpretation of our own and of others', however sincere and well-meaning.

E. Comprehending and interpreting the voice of the Holy Spirit.

1. The direct relationship between seeing a human need and hearing a voice.
2. The distinct possibility of speaking to ourselves in God's name.
3. The possibility of super-heated imagination creating impulse and "words of knowledge" is not only possible, but prevalent.
4. Suffice it to say - Jesus declares: My sheep know My voice, while the lambs have the task of learning to listen yet ahead of them. It is learned by example and trial-and-error.

F. Perceiving the nature of circumstances.

1. This is far more complex than what appears on the surface.
2. Paul's example in Acts 26:14 gives us a powerful lesson. "Why do you kick against the goad?" asks Jesus. The ox-goad was a pointed stick to increase the speed and obedience of the ox. If he kicked against it, it injured him all the more.
3. Which of us have accurately interpreted the pressure of circumstances so as to not fight against God who was trying to guide us (Hos. 2:6f) or, in a total reversal, yielded passively to a set of circumstances that were demonic and needing to be rebuked and corrected (Matt. 8:23-28).
4. The question arises, "Is this God's resistance or satanic hindrance?" The answer is not simple.

G. Guidance is the manner in which the Father of spirits is training His children for mature sonship.

1. He gives His Word, His Spirit, and His grace.
2. He does not compel men's love and response.
3. He does not silence our questions, and never is He impatient with our frustrations.
4. For me, thus far, He has never given me a short cut to certainty which eliminated the risk or cut back on the amount of faith required.
5. He says to us, "If you abide in My Word...you will be made free."

Notes:

Session 5: The Ordinary and the Exceptional

- A. How we value God's Word is different than how we use it in daily life.**
- B. The two extremes here are over-dependence upon the exceptional or rejection or denial of the exceptional.**
1. Time factor in the book of Acts compared to our life time.
 2. Expectancy and familiarity are the keys.
- C. Exceptional means of guidance are:**
1. **Angels:** "Ministering spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those who inherit salvation" (Acts 8:26 and Heb. 1:14).
 - a. Acts 27:21-24: Message to God's servant in crisis.
 - b. Acts 5:17-23.
 2. **Signs:** Supernatural phenomena ordained by God to act as a symbol or point of recognition on the journey He has assigned (I Sam. 10:1-7).
 - a. Ex. 3:1-4: The burning bush.
 - b. Lu. 17:26-30: Sign of Noah.
 3. **Visions:** Functions as direction for ministry or personal revelation that is needed (Acts 16:9-10).
 - a. Acts 9:10-16: Direction for personal work.
 - b. Acts 18:9-11: Encourage and reassure His servant.
 4. **Dreams:** Given to the godly and the ungodly for the execution of God's purpose (Matt. 1:20).
 - a. Gen. 41:1-57: Pharaoh's dream to preserve God's people.
 - b. Matt. 2:12, 13: Joseph's guidance and protection.
 5. **Fleeces:** A most extraordinary and often confusing form of guidance (Jud. 6:11-40).
 - a. Jud. 6:11-16: Gideon already knew the will of God, so this was not for guidance.
 - b. Jud. 6:1.5, 17, 36-40: The sign was required because of fear and timidity.
 - c. Jud. 6:39-40: Gideon knew he had risked God's displeasure.
 - d. This shows us God's Fatherly response to accommodate our human weaknesses.
- D. Ordinary means of guidance.**
1. God's written Word: God's supreme criteria "until the day dawns" (Ps. 119:105 and II Pet. 1:17-21).
 2. The Holy Spirit: In His own mysterious manner Jn. 3:3 and Lu. 4:1).
 3. Personal integrity: Basic honesty as revealed in the tenor of Scripture (Prov. 11:3).
- E. Walking in the Spirit and personal obedience reduces the need and expectation for the extraordinary forms of guidance (Isa. 30:21).**
1. We do not seek the experience, but we seek God and His will. He provides the guidance and its excitement as He desires.
 2. Super-heated imagination, unchecked and unregulated, is the primary source of deception.

Notes:

Session 6: Dealing with the Demonic

A. We must now add a third player into the mixture of ingredients needed to properly comprehend guidance.

1. The reality of Satan, demons, and fallen angels is not a discussion here, because we have accepted the authority and integrity of God's Word.
2. An ancient Welsh prayer book contains a prayer that might help us: "From ghosties and ghoulies and long legged beasties and things that go bump in the night, good Lord, deliver us" (due acknowledgement to Al Durrance).
3. Witchcraft, like guidance, has its own two forms of manifestations: ordinary and extraordinary.
 - a. We usually encounter and read about the extraordinary.
 - b. Note the direction of modern film industry.
4. Witchcraft, reduced and defined, is trying to get God to change His will so that He might do our will (I Sam. 15:20-23, 16:14).
 - a. All of the demonic, occult, reincarnation and thrust of New Age is knowledge of the future and salvation without dependence on God!
 - b. Every source of "knowing the future" apart from God is forbidden to the child of God (Dent. 18:10-14).

B. Recognition of being in Christ, takes us out of the old, places us into the new creation (II Cor. 5:17).

1. Col. 2:12-17: Place of release and victory.
2. Acts 26:18 and Col. 1:13 grants us a change of government.

C. We are not here teaching on the demonic but only as it touches guidance.

1. The Holy Spirit and Satan involved in the temptation of our Lord (Lu. 4:1-13).
2. The temptation is to do that which is "of himself" John 5:30) apart from dependence upon God.

D. Attempts to know guidance apart from God may result in real bondage.

1. The first symptom is an internal struggle which can be sexual, mental, or spiritual,
 - a. Blasphemous thoughts and expressions.
 - b. Ridicule, an inward mockery of the things of God.
2. The second symptom is compulsive behavior, that is, behavior which is beyond your own will to control or direct.

E. Recognition and use of God's provisions (Isa. 11:1-5).

1. By the provision of God, I am in Christ.
2. I know that I am subject to error, moved by my appetite and senses, and that my will is prone to weakness.
3. I also know that Christ dwells in me by the power of His Holy Spirit. His gifts and promises, then, are the disposition of the Son seeking to please His Father.
4. The Holy Spirit is given so that I can think, act, and express myself acceptably (Rom. 12:1-2).
5. God's seven gifts were given to His Son, and His Son imparted them to us John. 16:15).

- a. **Wisdom**: A supernatural gift to enable me to know and discern spiritual things. An intimate, deep knowing that relishes the things of God (I Cor. 2:10-16).
- b. **Understanding**: Makes us unsatisfied with the superficial. It does not dispel the mystery of the faith, but seeks to go deeper into that mystery. Illumination of your understanding makes it clear to you and it becomes a way of life and guidance for actions (Col. 1:26).
- c. **Counsel**: The Son does only what He sees the Father doing. This gift shows us the desires of the Father, not only what to do, but the manner in which it should be done. "Arise, go into the city and you will be told what you are to do" (Acts 9:6).
- d. **Strength**: The Hebrew translation is fortitude or that ability which sustains us in particularly confusing or strenuous moments. "To be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16).
- e. **Knowledge**: The ability to see and know from God's point of view. This, of course, includes knowing ourselves. Spiritual knowledge results in a Kingdom world view, setting us free from vain philosophies and suggestions from the world of darkness.
- f. **Reverence**: Translated piety or godliness, this is a governing value, a regulating attitude. Blending adoration and respect with love and confidence, it reassures our hearts in His presence.
- g. **Fear**: Jesus..."filled with a spirit of fear"? The answer is that there are two kinds: one of chastisement and servility, and the other fear which causes us to avoid injury and transgression, because we do not want to offend. It is the motivation whereby we continually and repeatedly refer everything to the Father.

Notes:

Session 7: Spiritual Prisoners of War

A. Reality of spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-20)

1. Changing kingdoms means changing governments, making us a servant of another (Col. 1:13).
2. Returning to the government from which we were delivered is a real possibility (Heb. 11:15).

B. Improper response when "we see war" (Ex. 13:1.8).

1. Guidance was indirect, due to the immaturity and improper responses.
2. Very frightened (Ex. 14:10)
3. Challenged leadership due to unbelief (Ex. 14:11- 14).

C. God's wise provision in the prospect of war (Dem. 20:1- 8).

1. First issue is double-mindedness am. 1:6-7).
2. Second issue is fear that is contagious (Rev. 21:8).

D. Spiritual prisoner of war.

1. One who goes out into the midst of human need to help others and is, for whatever reason, re-captured himself.
2. Establish the fact that the one who is re-captured remains a citizen of the country for which he fought.
3. Paul demonstrates this both for our caution and to instruct us to be able to help others.

II Tim. 2:24-26, Amplified Bible: "And the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome – fighting and contending. Instead he must be kind to everyone and mild-tempered – preserving the bond of peace; he must be a skilled and suitable teacher, patient and forbearing and willing to suffer wrong. He must correct his opponents with courtesy and gentleness, in the hope that God may grant that they will repent and come to know the Truth--that is, that they will perceive and recognize and become accurately acquainted with and acknowledge it, and that they may come to their senses [and] escape out of the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, [henceforth] to do His [God's] will."

4. It is apparent that these are indeed believers, who, according to vs. 18, "missed the mark and swerved from the truth..."
5. The BAR's that hold this prisoner of war are stronger than iron:
 - a. Bitterness.
 - b. Anger.
 - c. Resentment.

6. Five necessary spiritual disciplines in order to free the P.O.W.:
 - a. He must not be quarrelsome... (Fighting/contending).
 - b. He must be kind to all... (Beyond the Church).
 - c. He must be able to teach... (Logical instruction).
 - d. He must be willing to suffer wrong... (Putting up with the bad).
 - e. He must possess courtesy and gentleness... (Without pride and arrogance).
 - f. Result: Perhaps God may have an opportunity (through us) to "get to give" them a gift of repentance.
7. They come to their senses (prodigal son) and escape out of the snare of the devil. Hereby, they are free to do God's will once again.

Notes:

Session 8: In the Will of God While Out of the Will of God

- A. The story of Jeremiah, the Prophet, gives us an important insight into guidance (Jer. 43:7-8).**
1. The people (corporately) were out of God's will.
 2. God sent Jeremiah to them.
- B. Religious, mechanical interpretation of God and His actions has left the Church unwilling and afraid to go "out where the sinners are."**
- C. Jesus, by life and example, ate, drank, and fellow-shipped with those in need. He was the Physician who went where the "sickness" was.**
1. Business.
 2. Prisons.
 3. Motorcycle gangs.
 4. Horse racing circles.
 5. High society.
 6. Street people.
- D. Encouragement to recognize the validity of God sending you to a particular people that others may not understand.**
1. Caution regarding the spiritual P.O.W.
 2. Excitement and reward of being sent.
- E. Symptoms of being out of the will of God; these are not proofs, because there are other variables (Deut. 28:65-68).**
1. Uneasiness.
 2. Restlessness.
 3. Grief of mind.
 4. Uncertainty.
 5. Fearfulness.
 6. Lack of assurance.
 7. Discontent,
 8. Spiritual bondage.
- F. Serious questions which only you can answer before the Lord:**
1. Is it possible to have some of these symptoms, or others similar, while safely within my church when the will of God was that I be sent to some other particular group, people, or nation?
 2. Could this possibly be one of the more hidden causes of church fights, hype, and entertainment?
- G. One more observation can be made to put guidance in as broad a perspective as we are able:**
1. Acts 8:33 says "In humiliation, His judgment was taken away..."

2. In my Greek studies, I finally translated these words freely to say something like "while He was under the dealings of God, He didn't get a fair deal."
 - a. We cannot now talk about God's ability to process us in behalf of others (II Cor. 1:3-6).
 - b. We can say, unequivocally, that often we may feel out of the will of God due to misunderstanding, injustice, and accusations.
3. It is here that a mature grasp of God, His Word, and His way would enable us to stand steadily and not "kick against the ox-goad," i.e. the circumstances ordered by the sovereign Lord.

Notes:

Session 9: Super-Heated Imagination

A. Understanding the concept of mixture: When we are encouraged to "examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good," it implies that mixture is present.

1. Few things in life or in the realm of the Spirit are as black and white as we desire.
2. For the most part, ordinary Christians hesitate to take responsibility to examine, discern, and refuse what is weird.
3. One result of this series on guidance is to restore your confidence in your own evaluation.
 - a. If you think a thing is an absurdity or an insult, it probably is.
 - b. The emphasis must not be negative. We must know the false in order to respond to the real.

B. Mixture means the presence of two or three elements at the same time in the realm of guidance, gifts of the Spirit, and biblical interpretation.

1. The ingredients are: God and His Holy Spirit, the human spirit, often unregulated, and the possible presence of the demonic.
2. This seems to upset some, because they do not *want* the responsibility of discernment.
3. Mixture means 40% truth, 40% human, and some 20% demonic influences. Of course, this varies on the spectrum to the extremes of pure Holy Spirit (II Tim. 3:10 and purely demonic (1 Tim. 4:1).

C. Sneak-stimuli.

1. The very eagerness to learn to hear God and to move in the Spirit makes us open to questionable impressions, voices, leadings, and prophecy.
2. Super-heated imagination is that force of inertia that causes us to think we have heard from God. a. It is not demonic.
3. It is the manifestation of our own soul.
4. Like a "virus" lying in a computer program, these impressions rise up to confuse, create conflict, and occasionally cause catastrophic injury.

D. The battle ground of the mind (II Cor. 10:5).

1. The mind can be corrupted (2 Cor. 11:3), defiled (Tit. 1:5), blinded (II Cor. 4:4), confused (II Thess. 2:2), unsettled (Lu. 12:29), diverted (Jam. 1:8, 4:8), and discouraged (Heb. 12:3).
2. Often there are attempts to bypass the mind, attempting to move us by the purely emotional, intuitive, or irrational.
3. God's answer for this is prayer, in the Holy Spirit, when we do not know what the issues are (Rom. 8:26-27).

E. The Holy Spirit, given the job of communicating the will of God, works from within the human spirit to enlighten us (Eph. 1:17-18).

1. That which originates outside, audible or expressions of the mind, needs to be examined carefully.
2. When persistent or urgent, requiring sudden action without time to measure the issues, it needs to be questioned or resisted.
3. When confusing or clamorous and we are hindered from thinking, it is erroneous.

F. Some suggestions as to super-heated imagination:

1. "You are a special instrument of God" - works to feed our self-love.
2. "You are more spiritually mature than the others" attempting an exaggerated self-opinion.
3. "You are different than the others" - sense of special favor, either in blessing or in dealings or suffering.
4. "You must take your own path" - cultivates the individualism which separates and divides.
5. "You should give up your job and live by faith" -intimidation and false guidance which can result in personal injury.

G. Guidelines for release and freedom:

1. Imagination and demonic influence almost always seek to legitimize our own deep-rooted desires.
2. Fasting and prayer does not guarantee freedom.
3. Never proceed to act on impressions, voices, or prophecy without two or three confirmations.

Notes:

Session 10: Unconditional Guidance

A. Much, or even most guidance "happens" when we are not aware or are hardly aware that we are being guided.

1. God's providence works on a narrow, dangerous margin.
2. Providence is that ability whereby God makes all things serve His purpose, even our mistakes.

B. There are two basic forms of guidance: conditional and unconditional.

1. Conditional: God's guidance is contingent upon our response and obedience (Isa. 58:1-11 and II Kings. 18:4-7).
2. Unconditional: God acts sovereignly and providentially regardless of man's actions or attitudes (Isa. 45:1-5 and Matt. 5:44-45).

C. The child of God, in order to find rest and security, must know and trust God's providence. We pray and testify repeatedly that "God's providence is my inheritance!"

D. Examples of God's providence, designed to allow us to rest in His providential care:

1. I Kings. 22:29-37: Arrow, shot by chance, to fulfill God's design.
2. Esther. 2:21-6:13: Mordecai's promotion to Prime Minister.
3. Esther, 6:1-4-7:10: Hanging Haman on his own gallows.
4. Acts 14: 17: God's providence used to bear witness to the heathens.
5. Matt. 6:25-34: God's over-shadowing providence is designed to release them from anxiety.

E. Providence teaches us that the world and our personal lives are not ruled by chance, luck, or fate, but by a loving Father who revealed His heart and intention in the incarnation of His Son.

1. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; the remainder of wrath shall You restrain and gird and arm Yourself with it (Ps. 76:10 Amp.).
2. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good..." (Rom. 8:28).

Notes:

Session 11: Arguing with the Umpire

A. Discernment and knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit.

1. Difference between lambs and sheep, children and sons.
 - a. Consider the problem of the spiritual "teenager."
 - b. Neither child nor adult in the Spirit, but in the excitement of transition, seeking both identity and approval.
2. The lesson on ordinary and exceptional guidance causes us to know that most guidance is low-key and is seldom startling or world-shaking.
 - a. Therefore, it is easy to misunderstand, i.e. "I wonder if that is God's voice?"
 - b. The mixture - God's will, my will, and possible demonic influence confuses the issue.
3. Five serious factors inhibit my hearing clearly:
 - a. Fear of loss of control, the fact is I feel safe and I like being "in control."
 - b. Uncomfortable with what God might have to say, i.e. it will cost me, be inconvenient, or disagreeable.
 - c. Reluctant to hear because of the weight and responsibility of knowing (I Sam. 3:15).
 - d. The sheer momentum, emotional investment, inertia of my own ideas or desires.
 - e. What the decision to hear and attempt to obey will cost those I love, i.e. wife, family, business.

B. What safeguard has God built into His system of guidance to help me and protect me from myself? (Phil. 4:7)

1. The umpire which is the Holy Spirit (Col. 3:15).
2. The peace of God witnesses within us for or against intended course of action,

C. How does the umpire, which is the peace of God, function on a practical basis?

1. **Negatively** - It is not a mere absence of disturbance because of unfavorable circumstances.
2. **Positively** - It is a conscious rest in the midst of unrest, independent of circumstances, favorable or unfavorable.
3. **Experientially** - It is a supernatural rest in the midst of unrest and therefore passes "all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).
4. **Positionally** - It is the peace of God (Phil. 4:7) for all those who have made peace with God (Rom. 5:1).
5. **Judicially** - The peace of God is to "rule" (literal: arbitrate) in our hearts (Col. 3:15). That is to say, He is to act as the umpire or arbitrator to settle disputes in our course of action or direction.

D. The peace of God, unconscious, providential guidance, seems to work on the rheostat principle.

1. It is possible, even probable, that in our own desire and inertia we will walk against the peace of God to our own hurt and personal disadvantage (Acts 15:37-39).
2. It is equally possible, in self-will and determination, to break down and go against a set of providential circumstances given by God for your advantage and protection (Hos. 2:5-7).

Notes:

Session 12: Spiritual Scaffolding

A. Scaffolding is that which is necessary to build the building. When the job is complete, the scaffold is removed (I Cor. 13:8-10).

1. God is seeking to build a mature life, not dependent on the scaffold.
2. He does and will change the way He guides us when our attention is given to the method rather than the result.
3. Confusion results when we experience the "rubber crutch" syndrome, i.e. forms of guidance that worked so long and so effectively seem to "let us down."
4. This is particularly true of a wrong dependence on personal prophecy or "getting a word from the Lord."

B. Personal prophecy has three biblical uses:

1. Edification, exhortation, comfort (1 Cor. 14:3).
2. Direction, warning, or protection (Acts 11:28, 21:10).
3. Impartation, accompanied by laying on of hands (I Tim. 4:14).

C. Because of the possibility of mixture being present, all prophecy was assigned to be judged (1 Cor. 14:29).

1. Nothing is more important in maturity and guidance than release from being "captured" by prophecy which is mixture.
2. Learn not to respond to things that disturb your peace and leave you questioning (Deut.18:22).

D. Pieces of scaffolding needed to build our life of effective guidance:

1. Acts 8:26-29: All the necessary guidance may not come at once.
2. Acts 9:1-7: The farther we are from God, the louder He might have to speak.
3. Num. 12:5-10: Hearing the audible voice of God may not be a compliment. It was, however, in Ex. 33:11.
4. Num. 12:6-8: Our personal relationship is a factor as to whether God speaks more directly or indirectly.
5. Gen. 33:13: By allowing ourselves to be "driven," a negative effect, even death, can occur.
6. Gen.33:13-14: As Jacob was considerate, so God as our Father knows our speed and condition.
7. I Kings 3:5, 9: God is pleased to respond to our request for a "hearing heart."

Notes:

Session 13: It Is Not That Easy

A. Marketing - lower the cost and up the advertising.

1. The modern Church is thoroughly "marketed."
2. Long term "paralysis" is beginning to set in.
3. End of hype - beginning of product that works.

B. Challenge is to finish our course, keep the faith (II Tim. 4:7).

1. First requirement is to be in possession of a course to finish Jn. 17:4).
2. Second requirement is the clarity of vision and sufficient motivation to pay the price, expend the effort, and embrace the pain.
3. Third, is the tremendous variables that are present in guidance. This requires:
 - a. An unshakable foundation.
 - b. Spiritual growth and maturity.
 - c. Principles, rather than predictable methods.

C. There are several inexorable views of life which we must not over-spiritualize. While God is able to providentially use "all things," wrong interpretation and false application cause deep confusion in the realm of guidance.

1. Law of sowing and reaping.
2. Law of the fool and his money.
3. Law of physical and emotional health.
4. Law of failure and betrayal.

D. Recognition and response to religious politics (Ezek. 34:17-22).

1. Sub-normality of the Church.
2. Self-interest of the leaders and the people:
3. Trampled grass and muddy water.
4. Necessity of pressing through to find Jesus.
5. Church can be shaken, Kingdom unshakable.

E. Conflicting opinions of experts.

1. 40 years of study and research.
2. D.D., Ph.D. and a man named Fiddle.
3. Experts that change disciplines.
4. Cacophony of voices.

F. Heresy and aberration which becomes orthodoxy.

1. Once a teaching is "popularized" by book, media, or a strong personality, it is entrenched.
2. Cure-all doctrines and fads compared to a fully equipped tool box.
3. Truth is fallen in the streets (Isa. 59:14).
4. Like Pilate, we may be provoked to say, "What is truth?"

G. Success in guidance is found in Jn. 21:18-19.

1. There is a great difference between maturity and immaturity.
2. Mark of maturity is conscious need and dependence upon God.
3. There should be an occasion or a time when the initiative for our life passes from us to Him.
4. The issue of the exchange is the goal of the Christian life - conformed to His image.

Notes:

Session 14: What to Do When Nothing Seems to Work

- A. This is my personal check-list. It has kept Carol and me pressing in and pressing on for these many years.
- B. These are given in order of priority. All of this is based on the fact that there are no bidden sins or serious transgressions. Confession and repentance is the only answer for that.
- C. At times, for no apparent reason, God will allow the consciousness (our awareness) of His presence to be withdrawn. This is not the “Dark Night of the Soul”, but has similar symptoms,
- D. Our personal check list, when nothing seems to work, is as follows:
 - 1. Go to bed for 12 hours or more. Shower and dress up. Amazingly, it seems the Lord returns to His throne (Heb. 4:3).
 - 2. Seek to ascertain if you are sick on honey (Prov. 25:16).
 - 3. Remember the difference between faith and trust.
 - a. Faith is active.
 - b. Trust is passive. (God may be asking you to trust Him)
 - 4. If you perceive it to be some kind of warfare, preserve your place *in Christ*, refusing to be intimidated. After you have done all, stand. Remember, we can lose a battle without losing the war (Eph. 6:13).
 - 5. Re-examine your human will. It may be a matter of being unwilling. The lesson is John 7:17.
 - 6. Possibly, we have participated in "damage-joy." Prov. 24:17 gives an insight that permeates the Scriptures, allowing us to know how God feels about this. Since this is a sin of the mouth and attitude, release comes from God and the person.
 - 7. Digging a little deeper, we can almost be certain that one of the two "Christian" problems are now being revealed:
 - a. Fear of losing control.
 - b. Loss of personal advantage.
 - 8. Finally, when the Bible reads like the Wall Street Journal and you feel like the Psalmist who said in his alarm, "All men are liars."

- a. **Don't kill an Egyptian!** This extends your stay in the wilderness and complicates the present and - the future.
- b. Don't take some drastic action, i.e. marriage, get drunk, take off, quit your job, etc.
- c. These kinds of actions nearly always happens when we are pressed out of measure (Num. 20:10-12).

Conclusion:

When the Psalmist says, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," He teaches us clearly and succinctly that only the fully guided life can know a truly contented life-style.

Notes: