
STEPPING FORWARD . . . UNCERTAINLY

How Does God Lead Us Day-by-Day?

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ACTS 15:36-16:10

When we think about being led by God to go to a particular place, or to do some specific activity, we tend to imagine that 1) we will not be able to discern His leading—we won't "*get it*"; or, 2) we should wait for a lightning bolt or a Charlton-Heston sounding voice "out of the sky" before we move forward. Actually, God's leading in our lives is much easier to determine than we might think, and His leading comes in many different forms—most of which seem rather like ordinary life.

The Book of Acts is a no-frills record of the Early Church responding to Jesus' mandate to *go into the entire world to make disciples of all nations*; those 1st Century believers had even less to go on than we do today because the New Testament was still being written! Their only scriptural clues about what to do came from Old Testament patterns and prophecies; nevertheless, they followed what they knew from the word of God, and they actively expected to be led by the Lord, day-by-day.

What we find in the Book of Acts, again and again, are people responding to situations and circumstances, and thereby, ending up having accomplished amazing things in the Name of the Lord. Our modern paradigm for "*being led by God*" almost insists on getting direction before we start moving anywhere. That may explain why so many believers do not feel very led by Him; if we have a bit more initiative to do whatever, we will find ourselves much more led by God in terms of what we end up doing.

Having said that, what does this passage from the Bible reveal about a few of the ways in which God might lead us to impact people in our daily lives?

WAYS IN WHICH THE LORD MAY LEAD US:

- **Simple concern for others' spiritual well-being (Acts 15:36).** Since Jesus said that love for others would be the defining mark of His followers, and since our main job is to

disciple people, it makes sense that having them on our heart is a significant prompting from the Lord to see how they are doing.

- ***Desire for partnership and company with others (Acts 15:37)***. True fellowship is one of our highest callings, so wanting to spend time with other servants of the Lord—not just Christian chums—in order to do some type of ministry, can be a good indicator of God’s leading.
- ***Disagreements with other believers (Acts 15:38-40)***. Different perspectives on how best to do ministry can separate former friends; though we are all in the family, we do not see “eye to eye” about everything. Taking a different path than others take—especially those with whom we have previously walked closely—ends up leading us into new places with new partners.
- ***Special affinities with people we meet along the way (Acts 16:1-3)***. While our assignment is to teach and disciple “as we go”, there will be special connections with a few individuals to whom we are to apply extra mentoring. Their “needs” (in terms of what will best prepare them for future ministry) are a simple “to do” list for us.
- ***Passing along the latest truths we have received for our own lives (Acts 16:4)***. Remember, 99% of what God has in mind for us to do centers on what we do to/for the people around us; “big ticket” events and “go to the ends of the earth” callings occur fairly rarely in our walk, and even when they do happen, God’s primary interest is in what we’ll do/say to the people who happen to live at that edge of the earth.
- ***A “check” about something we are thinking about doing (Acts 16:6-8)***. Suddenly we become aware that the course we are on is not the one we are to stay on; it is not a “nasty” thing, and rarely can we give logical reasons for the feeling. But we just know something doesn’t feel right. Here’s the confidence: when we are giving ourselves in vital ministry, and then feel a “check” (not discouragement or dissatisfaction) about it, we can be fairly sure it is the Lord’s leading.
- ***A particular vision or impression to bring truth and life where we might not have been planning on going (Acts 16:9-10)***. Though we can plan our path, the Lord directs our steps quite distinctly—either steering us on an almost opposite course, or making the “next steps” abundantly clear.