

THE WORD OF GOD IS MY GUIDELINE The Obstacle of Indecision

Often we face the obstacle of indecision when we don't know which way to go. There appears to be many forks in the road and no writing on the wall to help make the way clear. Again the Word of God is our map or *guideline* to show us the way.

In the previous lesson, we discussed setting our faces like a flint, from Isaiah 50:7. Strong's Concordance gives us the Hebrew definition of the word *flint* as being hard as a rock, or to bind yourself firmly to something. Webster defines it as anything very hard or unyielding. We set our faces like a *flint* when we are unwavering in our pursuit of God. We have studied how His Word is our *lifeline* when we are in desperate situations, as well as our *plumb line* to adjust our thinking. Now we look to the Word as our *guideline*.

Have you become determined to find God's perfect will for your life? Have you bound yourself firmly to His Word, braiding His truth into the core of your being? Have you become unyielding to the world and your flesh? God wants you to become a rock of resolve to follow hard after Christ. Staying in the Word daily is a key ingredient.

For those of you who have had young children, you probably recall the times you tried to "catch their eye" when they needed discipline. I remember our firstborn son would immediately respond to mom's eye if he got out of line, even if he was across the room with a group of rowdy children. He was compliant and eager to please from an early age. Our younger son needed more than "the look"; he responded best when I physically reeled him in from the raucous. He did not respond to eye contact like his big brother did! In fact, he would avoid it! Thankfully, through the years both of them have learned to set their eyes on Jesus and look daily to Him for guidance.

Are you eager to catch God's eye? Where are you looking? Hopefully, you're not avoiding Him by looking away at other things, as some children might do. As our sons needed to keep their eyes on their parents, so we need to keep our eyes fixed on the eye of God. There's much to be gained from that gaze.

DAY ONE

1. What four things does God do for us according to Psalm 32:8?
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2. What does Song of Solomon 4:9 have to say about the eye?
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Can you even imagine that the Lord is ravished when He catches us glancing up at Him! Doesn't that thought inspire you to keep your eyes focused on our King? Look up often and let Him catch your eye.

3. In Psalm 119:105 and 130, how is the Word of God described?

4. From Psalm 123:1-2, where are we to look and to what is this compared?

5. From Psalm 121:1, where is the psalmist gazing?

6. From Psalm 121:2, from where does our help come? How is He described here?

7. What words are repeated in verses 3-8 to let us know God's eye is on us?

8. From verses 3-8 of this psalm, what else does God do for those who look to Him?

9. How important it is to fix our gaze on Jesus, and what awesome benefits there are to looking to the right place for guidance. How does Colossians 3:1-2 add to this?

10. What does Hebrews 12:2 also tell us about where to look?

11. From Hebrews 12:2-3 on what did Jesus set his eyes when He was on the cross?

12. How does this encourage you when you need to persevere through trials?

DAY TWO

Does the joy that is set before you enable you to endure the hard times of life? Because God's Word tells us that the plans God has for us are good and not harmful, we should have a blessed hope that carries us through. When I was waiting for the report to come back from the lab after my first mastectomy, my sister kept reminding me over and over again the words from the old hymn, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*: "**Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.**" I repeated them over and over again and held on to the truth of those words. He would get me through each day, and He would fill me with hope for those to come. How do you endure, you ask? You hold on to hope!

1. What phrase describes believers in Zechariah 9:12?

2. Who might the fortress refer to in this verse?

3. What promise is given in the second part of verse 12?

4. From Isaiah 61:7 to what are the two "instead of" phrases referring?

5. Name what replaces these things from that verse.

The frustration of infertility can be a confusing and difficult time of life for many women and their husbands. I found comfort in reading about the many biblical women who faced this dilemma. Even though Abraham was promised a son, he and Sarah were childless until he was 100 years old (Gen. 21:5). When Rachel could not bear children, she cried out, "**Give me children, or I'll die!**" (Gen. 30:1). It is said that Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord for a son (1 Sam. 1:10). In all of these cases, verses reveal the Lord had kept them from having children or that He had closed their womb. Being childless was a disgrace back then, so shame was attached to their heartache. While each of these stories has many lessons of their own, the one common thread is that the answer came. Isaac, Joseph and Samuel were living proof of God's blessing on these infertile women. Each forged through the obstacle of infertility. While I know many couples do

remain childless, I believe God has a plan for their destiny. Couples can become spiritual parents to children in their church or community. My sister never became a mom in the physical sense, but she has a ton of spiritual children who love her and need her.

The years I spent crying out to the Lord for a second child were very painful. I've already shared the verse that comforted me from Proverbs 13:12, "***Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.***" While there was none of society's shame or disgrace plaguing me, the heartache was at times more than I could bear. But when the longing became reality, I was euphoric! Two sons: my double portion!

6. How has God replaced your "instead of" experiences with His double portion?

DAY THREE

My challenge to you when in need of direction from God is to spend time in close communion with the Lord in the secret place, waiting upon Him. Then you will begin to understand spiritual principles and truths that will draw you even closer to Him. Each of us has to be filled up with God daily when the times are good in order to have strength to face the obstacles that will at times block our path.

1. Isaiah 57:14-15 (NIV) is a beautiful account of what God does for those who make Him their refuge. Write out these verses on the lines below.

2. Did you notice a double imperative in verse 14? What is it?

Remember God is building you up! And He says, "Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people." Can't you just imagine Him shouting that command over us as we run after Him!! Set your face like a flint, and nothing shall be impossible in this pursuit. God desires us to get to His intended goal, as He conforms us to the image of Christ. He has promised to be with us as we humble ourselves before Him and call on His name. He tells us in the above verse that He will revive the lowly and the contrite heart! You can take this promise to the bank! God's Word is truly our guide as we focus on Him.

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3. From Psalm 25:15 what happens when our eyes are ever on the Lord?

4. How would you define the word *snare*?

We discussed this in a past lesson, but it's interesting to note that the Greek word for "snare" is similar to the Hebrew word for "offense." Remember that *offense* comes from the word "skandalon" and refers to the bait in a trap. A *snare* is defined as a noose to catch animals or a hook for the nose. What a warning this gives us to ever keep our eyes on the Lord, for snares are the things God's people should carefully avoid.

5. From the following verses, what snares should we avoid?

Deut. 7:16 _____

Judges 8:27 _____

I Tim. 6:9 _____

Proverbs 29:25 _____

As we keep our eyes on the Lord, He will adjust our thinking and guide us in the path we should take. The obstacles, offenses and snares will be obvious to us as we walk in close communion with the Lord, and He will make a way when there doesn't seem to be a way.

6. What does Proverbs 3:5-6 tell us about guidance?

7. How does God guide us according to Isaiah 30:21?

8. What comfort do you receive from Psalm 31:15?

We've already determined from this study that God's purposes will not be thwarted. He will do as He pleases. He has written down a plan for your life that He wants to see you fulfill. Just as you might use a pattern to sew a dress or a map to find your destination, you can use the Word for your pattern. Keep repeating, "My times are in your hands." ©2011

DAY FOUR

The obstacle of indecision came before our older son when he was asked to fill in as interim music pastor at our former church. Part of his responsibilities was to head up the search committee to find a full time music pastor. He had spent nearly three years at Belmont University studying music but became disillusioned with the music industry. He also was concerned that many of his degree-bearing friends were waiting tables hoping for their big break. So he came home to finish his degree in accounting, looking to follow in his father's footsteps as a CPA. He had been part of music ministry all through his teen years but never felt called to be a music pastor. He had the best of both worlds when he began working with my husband in his not-for-profit business, while using his talents to satisfy his creativity at the church.

As the months went on, however, every candidate would somehow fall through. We noticed our son's frustration as he talked through the logic and reasoning of his decision not be a full-time pastor. Friends kept speaking into his life exclaiming, "Are you sure it's not you?" And he would respond emphatically with a big NO! Yet, God used His Word to guide our son's thinking.

I'll never forget the day he called us into his office to tell us he had been reading the book of Jonah. The application of scripture became clear, as he read how everyone in the boat was affected by Jonah's decisions. Our church, our business, and our family were all in the boat with him, and his obedience would affect everyone's well being. The fear of not obeying God became greater than the fear of full-time ministry. A Sunday school story tucked away in the Old Testament became his *guideline*. It's interesting that our younger son had mentioned that his big brother should read the book of Jonah and take the music job! That made me smile. It seems we all saw this coming before he did!

I'm pleased to report that this was the best decision our son could have made, for he thrived in this ministry position and became completely fulfilled and passionate about building God's Kingdom through worship in the local church. It prepared him for launching a new church with his best friend and ministry partner ten years later. The guiding power of God's Word nudged him in the right direction. That's why it's so important to braid the truth of God's Word into our lives every day so we will be guided by its light.

In conclusion, let's look at a familiar story in Numbers 13 and 14 when Moses sent twelve leaders to check out the land of Canaan. They were to determine what the people were like and what the land produced. After some time, the spies returned with conflicting reports. While it was a great land, ten fearful spies reported that the people were powerful giants. Only Joshua and Caleb gave a positive report. Read these two chapters before answering the following questions. It's an intriguing story.

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1. How did Joshua and Caleb respond to the fear of the people in Numbers 13:30?

2. How did the other ten spies respond from verse 31-33?

There are times we may feel like grasshoppers as we face giant obstacles in our life. Remember the story of David and Goliath? Recall the words of young David as he came against the giant in 1 Sam. 17:45-47, ***“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied...All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”***

3. Why do you think David faced the challenge with more courage than King Saul and his army?

4. How do the words of Zechariah 4:6 confirm David’s courageous declaration?

5. When we look back at Numbers 14:1-4, describe the way Israel complained when they heard the bad report of the ten fearful spies.

6. There are several scriptural examples of how murmuring and complaining angers God? What did Miriam do and what happened to her in Numbers 12:1-2 and 8-10?

7. How did the Lord respond to Moses about the complaints of His people in Numbers 14:26-29?

DAY FIVE

Think through the words from verse 28-29: “***I will do to you the very things I heard you say: in this desert your bodies will fall.***” What Israel said in verses 1-4 became their destiny in verses 28-29. God heard the complaints of the grumbling Israelites. The spies—the believing two and the unbelieving ten—determined their own destiny by the words they spoke. The men responsible for spreading the bad report were struck down and died of a plague. Only Joshua and Caleb survived and entered the land. Their perspectives were different from the unbelieving spies. They saw as God saw.

They had His mind and heart in the situation, confident they were following His way. What is our perspective? Do we see as God sees or are we constantly complaining, kicking against the goads of God’s Word? He will guide our life as we look to Him. Psalm 119:16 says, “***I will not neglect Your Word.***” Let’s make that our highest ambition.

Our words are powerful! We can actually negate our prayers by speaking words of unbelief and doom. I don’t think any of us realize the truth of Proverbs 18:21 that ***death and life are in the power of the tongue***. I’ve heard it said that if we don’t like what’s happening in our life to pay attention to what we’re saying! Are we speaking out the truth of God’s Word or declaring that nothing good ever happens to us? Instead of saying how we feel and how bad circumstances look, let’s commit to speaking the truth of God’s Word out loud over our circumstances.

1. What does Joel 3:10 tell us to say?

2. To what does Proverbs 12:14 describe our words?

3. What does Matthew 12:36-37 say about our words?

4. Regarding the words God speaks how does Romans 4:17 in the NIV explain the power of God’s words?

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5. How does Psalm 119:160 describe God's Word?

6. To what does Jeremiah 23:29 compare God's Word?

God's Word is powerful enough to call things that are not as though they were and is compared to a hammer that breaks in pieces the rock of most stubborn resistance. Our tongues also hold the power of life and death. Let this be a revelation to us—we can actually negate our prayers with our doom and gloom declarations. We need to stop talking about our problems or obstacles, and begin speaking to them! ***“Who or what are you, oh great mountain of human obstacles...you shall become a plain, a mere molehill!”***

Mark 11:23 ***“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go throw yourself into the sea’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.”***

In a positive sense, one of the scriptures I have begun declaring for my family comes from Isaiah 59:21.

“As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord. My Spirit who is on you and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever, says the Lord.” That is my hope for my family for generations to come.

If God said it, let's declare it as truth. He has put His words in our mouths and we can declare that those words will not depart from us or from our children and our grandchildren. Because we are in covenant with the Lord, we are assured that His Word will accomplish this. Isaiah 55:10-11 assures us that ***the Word that goes out from His mouth will not return empty but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it.***

In a previous lesson, we talked about learning God's righteous judgments through sanctified experiences. We sanctify our experiences when we acknowledge the Lord in all of our ways. We should bring each obstacle we face to the Word of God, finding a scripture to stand on. That is how our experiences become sanctified or dedicated to the Lord. As we walk the path of righteousness living, let's ask ourselves if we are resisting or embracing the guidance of His Word. Let's not allow the obstacle of indecision or the fear of making a wrong choice get us off track. We do that by searching the Scriptures and asking for guidance. The Lord is waiting for us to look to Him for the answer. Let's not set our eyes on the problem but on the Problem Solver. ©2011

Matthew 6:33 in the Amplified Bible says, “***But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His Kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right) and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.***” God does not want us to worry or be anxious about tomorrow but to seek Him first each day. He does not want us to be wise in our own eyes but to trust Him completely. Obey this command of seeking Him first and just watch how He brings the answers. We can spread the fame of His Name as over comers through believing in and acting on the power of God’s Word. Remember, God’s Word provides the guidance we need. Let’s not neglect it but determine that it be all that we need today to determine the path He would have us to take.

7. What does it say to do in II Chronicles 20:12 when you don’t know what to do?

8. What comfort do you receive from Psalm 145:15-20 about getting direction for your life?

9. What is the condition for blessing in James 1:25?

*Oh, Lord, help me to keep my eye on Your eye. Help me to trust in You with all my heart and not lean to my own understanding in the situations I face in life. Help me to avoid the snare of fearing others over You. I know my times are in Your hands, and that Your plans for me are good. I trust You to order my steps in the way I should take. Let this be my daily prayer: “**Direct my footsteps according to Your Word.**” In Your Name I pray, Amen.*

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