

Four Points on Guidance

#0625

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 9, 1968

What a wonderful Savior we have! Let us turn to His Words in Matthew the 11th chapter, verses 28 to 30.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”
Matthew 11:28–30.

You notice that the picture is one of changing a difficult situation for an easy one. Come, He says, you weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest. Learn of Me, and ye shall find rest. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Now we all know there are difficulties in the Christian road, but it is not those I wish to study with you this morning. I wish to study with you how to find the yoke easy and the burden light. Jesus says that that is what we will find if we will come with Him.

I think one of the most distressing things for many is to know for sure what they ought to do—anyone who loves Jesus even a little desires to please Him. The question is how to do it? As we go along through life, we find many ideas of what we ought to do and what we ought not to do. It would be hard to find any question on which there is unanimity. One thinks one thing, one another.

So this morning, Jesus invites us to find the easy way through all these problems. “Learn of Me,” He says. We are not simply to learn *about* Him; we are to learn *from* Him. He is to be our teacher, for it is written,

“All thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children” Isaiah 54:13.

The path of peace is one in which Jesus leads to certainty as to duty.

Now I would like to notice some of the rich promises covering this point. Go to the 58th chapter of Isaiah, please, and we will note here another clear promise:

“And the LORD shall guide thee continually” Isaiah 58:11.

Isn't that wonderful? “Ah,” somebody says, “I wish it could be true for me.” Well, it can be. God wants guides to guide you continually. That means that we will be at the right place at the right time with the right word. Nothing could be greater than that. Nothing more wonderful could be promised us.

“The LORD shall guide thee continually” Isaiah 58:11.

Do you want to know: what you ought to do? Where you ought to be? What work should you be doing? Do you want to know how to eat to please your Lord? How to dress to please your Lord? What kind of recreation does He want you to have? Do you parents want to train your children? What type of education to give them?

Are some of you interested in how to be more successful in keeping the Sabbath according to the commandment? Whatever your problem, my dear friend, whatever you need wisdom in, in business, in your day-by-day life in the home, the promise is “and the Lord shall guide thee continually.”

Now to many people, this is quite nebulous, mystical, more or less something that they wish could be true, but they don’t know how. I want to study it with you this morning. The promise is clear, “the Lord shall guide thee continually.”

Turn to another one, James the first chapter and the fifth verse. What is the promise?

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” James 1:5.

Clear promise. Do you lack wisdom? That means, is it something you don’t have? Something that you are without? Then do what? Ask. Ask who? Ask God. He gives to all men liberally.

What does that mean “liberally”? Plenty. Ample. Full and running over. No stinted gift. No meager supply. All you need.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God... and it shall be given him” James 1:5.

Well, we might multiply promises this morning. But I think these are sufficient to establish the fact that God wants to guide us. He longs to. He will. He does for those who let Him.

Now there are some things that the Lord has been sharing with me lately along this line that I want to share with you this morning. They have blessed my soul, and I know that all of us will get a blessing as we think of them.

I’m going to bring you four different angles on this matter of knowing for sure what we ought to do. I’m going to represent it by four books. Now the books are simply objected lessons, I could have used sticks, or rocks, or anything else. I’m just going to use these four books to represent these four concepts or four angles.

The first book that I want to put out here before us is a representation of God's perfect and ideal will for me. This is what God wants me to do. This is what He wants me to be.

Now I have another book here to put alongside of it, and this is to represent what I think God wants me to do and be. "Well," you say, "why two different books?" Because there are two different things many times. And to prove that, I shall simply read to you from the book *Education* page 18, this oft-quoted, never too often, sentence:

"Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children" *Education*, page 18.

Why this one towers up like Long's Peak. God's ideal for me. What He wants me to be. What He wants me to do. But that is higher than any human thought can reach. That is higher than I can reach, but thank God there is a little hill that I can see. What's that? That is what I believe He wants me to do. That is what I believe He wants me to be.

Now I can illustrate that in various ways. I suppose most here this morning are observers of the seventh-day Sabbath. And I also suppose that there was a time when many of you kept the first day of the week instead of the seventh day. Now, why did you keep the first day of the week? Some of you kept it because you thought that was what God wanted you to do. Am I correct?

Now in the law of God, the instruction is clear in the Fourth Commandment "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20:10. But at one time, that was a concept which your thinking didn't reach to. Do you see what I mean? And at that time, your idea of what God wanted you to do was to keep the first day of the week. God's glorious ideal, as expressed in His law, is to keep the seventh day of the week. But you didn't know that. You thought that you were pleasing Him in doing this.

Now I can illustrate it many, many other ways. But let me tell you something this morning, friends. No matter how long you have been a Christian, there are some things you think represent God's will for you that someday you will see differently.

And if you will turn to Proverbs in the sixth chapter, you will find a text in support of this proposition.

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" Proverbs 6:23.

Where do we find light? We find it in the law.

Now turn back to the fourth chapter of Proverbs and the 18th verse. Notice how that light shines upon us, how it is revealed to us:

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth..."

How?

“...more and more unto the perfect day” Proverbs 4:18.

Another translation puts it:

“But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day” Proverbs 4:18
(*English Standard Version*).

So we may think of the glory of the noontide as representing God’s ideal for us; His will for us. But we may think of the early light of dawn as representing what we see of that will. What we conceive that will to be.

But I have two other books—two other things to present to you in this matter of our relationship to a decision as to what we should do.

Now the first one represents what? God’s ideal. This second? This represents what I think His ideal is. What I believe He wants me to be and to do. All right.

Now the third one, what do you suppose it is? It’s what other people think I ought to do. And let me tell you, this is a big book. In fact, perhaps I ought to represent it with a whole library, vast numbers of volumes. For if you were to go to a hundred different people and ask them what you ought to do on a certain matter, I am not sure that you would get a hundred different answers, but I am very sure that you would get more than one. Am I correct? Yes.

Now what I am representing in this third volume is not just what Tom, Dick, and Harry would like to have you do, I am talking about the evaluation of other people of what God’s will for you is. It may be your Sabbath school teacher. It may be the church elder or the pastor. It may be some valued relative or friend.

You go to them. And you say, “Now look here, I am wondering what I ought to do about this or that. I am seeking to find God’s will for me. I wonder if you have any advice for me? I wonder if you have any counsel?”

So they give the counsel and advice. But, lo and behold, you find that it is different from what you believe down in your heart you ought to do. One. Two. Three.

Now I have a fourth one to put here. You’ll smile when I tell you what it is. But friends, I am not putting it up here to make you smile. I am putting it up here to make you think. You know what this fourth one is? If this first one is God’s ideal for me—what He really wants me, in the highest sense, to be and to do, and the second one is what I think, what I believe He wants me to do, and this third one is what other people really believe is God’s will for me, this fourth one is what I think they think I ought to do.

“Well,” you say, “isn’t that the same as number three?” Not always. It may be. And let me hasten to say right at this point, there may be matters in which all four of these are the same thing. But in most matters, there is a difference somewhere along the line.

Let me explain. Not long ago, I was in a certain place, and a person said to me, “You know, I wish if you would get a chance, you could drop a word to...” and so. This person lived in another place. “They think that you don’t approve of what they are doing about a certain matter. And they feel bad about it. So I wish you’d watch for a chance and drop a word to them that might reassure them.”

Well, I said to the individual who made this suggestion, “Now when I talk to this party, may I tell them that you told me that they had this apprehension and that they thought it would be well for me to give you a word of counsel and assurance?”

“Oh no,” they said, “I don’t think you had better do that. I don’t think they would like it if they knew that I said anything to you.”

“Well,” I said, “now just how will I go about that, then?”

“Well,” they said, “you can watch for an opportunity.”

“Well,” I said, “to tell you the truth, I don’t know that I have ever discussed the matter with the individual.”

It so happened that the problem there were bothered about was something that I not only had not discussed with them, I had no words of advice for them, and in my deepest heart, I had no conviction as to what they ought to do or not do. But do you see my point? That party was laboring under the thought that I thought God’s will for them was something different from what they were doing.

All right. Now let’s look at the four volumes. The question is when they are all four different, which one are we going to follow? “Ah,” somebody says, “that is the problem. That is the problem. You are right on the point now. That is the fix I am in.”

Well, if you are in that fix then that is why God brought you to this service this morning, and that is why God gave me this message for you. And may I assure any of you who are not in that problem this morning to salt down the principles we are studying for future reference. You will need them sometime. And remember our opening text. Jesus says for us to come weary and heavy-laden ones, and I will give you rest. Learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Which one of these four shall we follow? Well friends, let me be what may seem to be for the moment dogmatic, and I’ll tell you which one to follow. It is number two. That is the only one you *can* follow and find rest to your souls. And let me eliminate the others one by one, and you will see this is the only one left to follow if you want to find rest.

Some of you will say, "Why not number one?" I'll tell you why. It is invisible. It is out of reach. I read that here.

"Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children" *Education*, page 18.

And so, while you and I may acknowledge that God's ideal for us is higher than we can reach if it is higher than we can reach friends, let us certainly not wear ourselves out in a vain and fruitless endeavor to reach it. That is the way not to find rest, but to get so weary and worn that some people just give it all up entirely and say, "No use, no use!"

This is an ideal that we shall be forever approaching. I am glad, my dear friends, that there is something left for me to learn tomorrow. What do you say? I'd hate to go to a school where every day the teacher wrote the lesson on the blackboard and said, "Today you will learn to spell 'cat,' 'dog,' 'day,' 'night.' And your arithmetic lesson is, what is the answer to two plus two?" I could get a hundred on that. I could have yesterday and a year ago. What about you?

Wouldn't it be wonderful to go to school every day and get a hundred every day in every subject? On a program like that? Oh friends, I think after the third day, at least the third week, it would get very, very boring. What do you say? I am thankful that we have continually new scenes through which to pass, new problems to face, new difficulties to challenge us, and all of these are leading us to seek our Lord that we may understand His will. They are leading us to claim that promise:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" James 1:5.

To state it in another way, number two is getting closer to number one all the time. My understanding of God's will for me is getting nearer to what is best will really is. But what does He want me to do today? All He wants me to do is to walk in the light that He gives me.

Turn please, to John the 12th chapter, and let us read the wonderful statement of Jesus here:

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" John 12:35.

So, this second volume represents the place on the path where the light is shining now, and I see this to be God's will for me. A year from now, God's will for me is to be way up the road, perhaps doing some things that this morning I would think I would never be able to do. Perhaps eliminating some things from my life, which today I think are very important.

For today, where the light shines is the path of beauty. For today, what I believe God's will for me to be, *this* I must do. This is the path of rest. This is the path of joy. And this will lead me ever closer to this number one glorious ideal God's best and truest will for my life eventually.

But now, what about this third point. Shouldn't I listen to other people? Certainly, I should listen to other people. By the way, on this fourth point, wouldn't it be a shame dear friends to be bothered about what I thought somebody else thought I ought to do, and after years of weariness, discover that they never thought it once the whole time?

Certainly, God wouldn't leave me to the tender mercies of such a program, would He? Oh no, my dear friends! What is the place of human counsel? How much influence should we let the opinions, or what we think are the opinions of others, move us? Well friends, we ought all to listen to any word of advice that God may have for us through others. And the weight of that should depend, of course, upon their position, their experience, and their connection with God.

But my dear friends, there is a world of difference between listening to advice and blindly following advice. A world of difference. Let me read it here in the book *The Desire of Ages*. This puts it so clearly:

"We are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch" *The Desire of Ages*, page 668.

Now listen carefully:

"Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue" *Ibid*.

Isn't this wonderful, friends? Oh, see the glorious possibilities that are set before us! You can go to God personally and seek Him with all your heart, lay your life down before Him as a living sacrifice and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And He has promised to guide you.

Now He may use the advice of others as part of the answer to that prayer. But if you *blindly* follow the advice of others instead of looking directly to God, if you *blindly* follow the advice of others, and in the process crucify your own conscience, that's the way to get into bondage, friends. That's the way to get into bondage. Especially when you discover, as you soon will, that the counsel of others is varied. It is different depending upon who you look to, and even the person that you admire and think is ideal, and are ready to say, anything he says, I will do, you will find that he changes his mind too from time to time, and then where are you?

And so you see, my dear friends, the purpose of God in allowing others to give us advice and in allowing us to think that other people think things at times when they don't think them at all. God's purpose in both of these approaches to us is to lead us to seek Him more earnestly, to compare what they say with the written Word; to winnow, and sift all their suggestions on our knees in prayer in the secret place of communion with God, and finally come to convictions led by the Spirit which we can stand on, and stand by.

This is what led Luther to make his historic stand there that opened the way for the great Protestant reformation. This is what led the pioneers of this message in their search for truth.

Now somebody will say, "But isn't this dangerous, Brother Frazee?" Yes. It's very dangerous. It's very dangerous. But to do anything else is more dangerous, I can tell you that. And I will tell you what will happen, friends, if a thousand people will do what we have studied this morning, some fanatical extremist will take this number two and run it to death. But I hope that none of you are fanatics or extremists.

I hope that all of you will, in the providence of God, find the wonderful balance between a proper appreciation of the counsel of others, and on the other hand, having an individual experience with God yourself.

Notice this clear statement:

"Everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart" *The Desire of Ages*, page 363.

Now, let me clarify a certain area lest we become confused. I will take a very practical illustration. Suppose I am a nurse on duty taking care of a patient under a doctor's orders. Instead of following the doctor's orders, I take it upon myself to do what I think ought to be done for that patient. Is that the way for me to do it? "Well," you say, "Brother Frazee, you have just said a man ought to follow what he thinks is God's will for him instead of what other people think."

But listen, friends, whose responsibility is it if I am a nurse caring for that patient under a doctor's orders; whose responsibility is it? It is the doctor's. It is his responsibility.

Now, let me hasten to add, if I should come into a situation, and occasionally it is found, where the doctor was to give an order that is contrary as I see it to the health and life of that patient, do you know what I'd have to do? I'd have to resign. It wouldn't be the thing for me, since I was there employed to carry out the decisions of the doctor, for me to superimpose my conclusions, and to say, "Well, I will follow my conscience instead of the doctor's orders."

Do you see what I mean, my friends? I still have my conscience to live with. But following my conscience must not lead me to make the decisions that belong to

somebody else. The same if I am an employee in a factory, in a store, and I am told to do certain things. I am to follow the decisions of my employer, my supervisor in those matters, and I understand that when I accept the employment.

Let's take it in Sabbath school and church work. Suppose I am a Sabbath school superintendent, and I get an idea that I would like to follow a certain program in the Sabbath school. But there's a difference of opinion. What do I do? Do I say, "Well, I am Sabbath school superintendent, I will just follow my conscience, and the others can do as they please."? No. I take that to the Sabbath school council. I present my plans. If that is approved by the council, then I am carrying out the wishes, the decision, the choice, the convictions of the group. Do you see friends?

But suppose the Sabbath school council says, "Brother Frazee, those may be your ideas, but we don't agree with them, and so as Sabbath school superintendent, we are asking you to do this or this instead of what you have planned." Then what must I do? I must either—watch the point—I must either carry out the decisions of that Sabbath school council, or if I think a matter of great principle is involved, I must simply resign and let somebody else carry out those programs who believes in them.

Do you see friends? In either case, my heart is at peace. I am following correct principles. Never are we to violate our conscience.

Now in the army, some of our young men have found themselves at times where they were commanded to do something by their officer in the way of carrying a gun when they are noncombatants, or to do something they felt was breaking the Sabbath. What must they do? Live by their conscience. But suppose they go to prison for it? That's all right. Plenty of God's people have been in prison, and we don't ask the United States Army to run their program by our conscience. Oh no! That might be very difficult. All we say is, "I must live by the light that God gives my soul." Do you see, friends? All right.

So this morning I bring you back to our original text. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." All you weary ones who have worn out trying to keep up with the opinions of others, and what you think are their opinions, come and learn of Me, and I will give you rest. Come to the secret place of prayer. But may I warn you, friends, you must play fair with God.

You must never let these principles that we have studied this morning become a loophole through which you do just what you please. If you do, you have only yourself to thank for the sad results. Jesus teaches only those who surrender fully to Him. And the purpose of all this is not to find out what I want to do; it's to find out what He wants me to do. And if you play fair with Him and put your life and everything on the altar, God will be fair, and true, and faithful with you, and you can have a happy life.

Now, our closing text in Romans the 14th chapter, and this sums up what I have been studying with you this morning:

“Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth”
Romans 14:22.

So, the way to be happy is to never do anything that your conscience condemns you for. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself. Have a faith of your own, an experience of your own in finding and following the will of God. Listen to the opinions of others, weigh their advice, consider their counsel, but never let that become a substitute for knowing in your own soul what Jesus wants you to do.

[Testimony service]

[Elder Frazee’s comments at the end of the testimony meeting]

May I give you this closing word of caution? In following the principles we have studied this morning, be very careful that you don’t make your conscience the measure by which to weigh and consider the consciences of others. If God has made you free, He has surely made other men free. You as an individual may decide what you ought to do, but you cannot decide what the Sabbath school ought to do. You cannot decide what the church ought to do. You cannot decide what an institution ought to do.

Just the other day in a distant place, a lady asked me, “What do you think such and such an institution ought to do?” A large institution in another part of the country. They mentioned the particular problem. I said, “Sister, the Lord keeps me so busy trying to find out what He wants me to do in the little institutions that I have some responsibility with that I dare not take on the task He has never given me of deciding what the big institutions ought to do.”

I recommend that to you, my dear friends. Every minute you spend in trying to make the decisions of other people is that much time lost from arriving at God’s best, and highest, and glorious will for you. This will give us toward others a charity and tolerance, and in our hearts deep, personal convictions that we can follow with Jesus. Whether they lead us to prison, to the stake, to the cross, they will lead us at last to glory.

[Elder Frazee and the congregation sing, “All The Way My Saviour Leads Me”]

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