

Lord, I Need Your Guidance

Key Scripture:

*I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.
Isaiah 42:16 (NKJV)*

Today's Portion for the Journey:

The Twenty Third Psalm is one of the most loved passages in the Word of God for all believers throughout time. This Psalm clearly establishes our relationship with the LORD as one in which He leads, guides and protects us. He is the Good Shepherd who is committed to feeding and caring for His sheep. David found the LORD faithful as He led, guided and protected him, even when facing fierce enemies and walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death! Are you conscious of Him as your Shepherd? Jesus said His sheep hear His voice. I think we have all wished we could hear His voice more clearly! Did you ever wish that God would give you a compass that always pointed exactly in the direction of His way? Have you felt unsure of His will and direction in your life? This study focuses upon entering into that blessed rest of knowing and walking in the assurance that God is guiding your steps.

There is a wonderful word used in the Old Testament which describes God's guidance. It is Strong's #5095. It is pronounced "naw-hal" and it means 'to guide, lead, feed, or carry.' My heart thrills as I meditate on the various ways and places that this word is used, and the meaning that lies at the heart of this word when it is applied to God's guidance of His people. The definition given in the Theological Word Study Dictionary says that it denotes a shepherd's loving concern for leading his flock, especially those with young. Look at some of the other meanings associated with this word:

- to lead to a watering-place or station and cause to rest there
- to lead or bring to a station or goal
- to journey by stations or stages
- "leading or guide someone by the hand," i.e. to lead someone who is helpless or who needs to be guided aright
- to travel slowly and leisurely with his herds and children
- "to shepherd," protectively gathering young lambs in one's arms, and carrying them in one's bosom. The root specifically is connected with what such a shepherd does in leading pregnant ewes.
- loving concerned shepherd-like leading Isa 40:11; Isa 49:10
- David confesses that God gently leads him beside still waters
- To give rest to
- To refresh with food, (parallel to "makes me lie down in green pastures," Ps. 23:3 and prays God's continued care Ps 31:3
- tenderly conducting, e.g. feeble ones on asses 2Chr 28:15
- the weak through threatening enemies 2Chr 32:22
- the hungry through a famine Gen 47:17

This indicates to me the guidance is totally complete, He is not just walking ahead of us, but walking beside us and behind us to guide us as well. I think of a shepherd leading His sheep, walking beside his sheep, but also going behind the sheep to make sure they do not lag behind or fall back. The idea of God being on “every side” indicates He surrounds us and there is no vulnerable place where we won’t find God’s direct guidance. I used to have a sheepdog, and it was incredible to watch her herding a flock of sheep. Her focus on the sheep was intense, almost obsessive. She did not ever rest or sit still. She continually circled the sheep, going from one side to the other, keeping them in the right direction. She never pressed them to move too fast. She never made them afraid. She never let the sheep out of her sight. She clearly would have died for any one of her flock, had they faced danger. With the little lambs she was especially gentle, tenderly nudging them in the direction they were to go. They did not always cooperate with her, but she was completely undeterred, taking full responsibility for their protection.

*“Commit yourself to the LORD; Let Him deliver you,
Let Him rescue you, because He delights in you!” Ps. 22:8 (my paraphrase)*

*“Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries,
all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you watchfully.” 1 Pet. 5:7*

Psalm 37 is filled with promises for the believer related to His guidance and protection. “Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him and He will do it... The steps of man are established by the LORD, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the one who holds his hand.” Ps, 37:5,23-24 This passage provides us with two key aspects of receiving His guidance:

Trust: There are a number of different Hebrew words for “trust” but this verse uses ‘Batach’ (Strong’s #982). The word is often translated “confidence” or “security.” This word describes the perfect confidence and security we have in knowing He will manage everything concerning us exactly right and to know we can leave it all in His hands. There are several closely related words that come from this Hebrew root. It speaks of a place of refuge and safety, both in fact (safety) and in feeling (security). Batach means to hie for refuge, to attach one’s self to in confidence. The idea is of firmness, solidity of the person in whom we place our trust. This form of trust gives one a sense of well-being in knowing the rug will not be pulled out from under you. It is the opposite of constant anxiety and speaks of the rest we can have in knowing we can truly relax when we know the One who is in control. (Isa. 30:15)

Commit: The word “commit” used in this passage presents with a beautiful word picture! It means literally “to roll and repose each care of your load on Him.” The word means literally to roll a stone away from the well’s mouth. It also offers the picture of a camel which is heavily laden with a large load. The animal kneels down and tilts to one side to roll the burden off his back. We are to roll our burdens on the LORD and let Him carry them for us. When we trustingly do that, He promises that He will accomplish what we need. He not only establishes our steps, but He delights to watch over us and hold our hand! It is interesting that many words are created from the Hebrew word for “commit” used in this passage and one of them is Golgotha! Jesus paid the ultimate price in order to take upon Himself all of our burdens! Remember when He said He did it for the joy set before Him? Did you consider watching over and caring for you is one of His delights?

As I studied His Word on this topic, I realized I have often thought of God as one who sets down a set of rules or directions, things to do or not to do in life. I unconsciously thought that I would be successful if I followed His rules. I need to be more aware of Him as our loving parent watching over us and enabling us to do His will. Meditation on God’s word shows us His tremendous love and His concern for us. He is continually with us. He

holds us by the hand! He does not expect us to get it right without His constant help. What kind of parent would lay down a whole list of rules for their three-year-old, good rules that would ensure the child's safety and well-being, and then go off and leave that child alone to follow the rules or perish? No child that age would last long without the loving and watchful care of the parent, whose responsibility is to keep the child safe. Our Father teaches us, and leads us and guides us, not from afar, but from a very close vantage point. He is protecting us and holding us by the hand to keep us from "being hurled headlong." (See Ps. 37, esp. verse 24 Amp; Ps. 73:23-24)

- ♥ Trust in the LORD for He supplies all of our needs
- ♥ Delight in the LORD for He fulfills all our desires
- ♥ Commit unto Jehovah for He accomplishes all things for us
- ♥ Rest in Jehovah for He looks after His saints
- ♥ Wait upon Jehovah for He bestows all blessings
- ♥ Look unto Jehovah for He rewards all waiters

Prayer: LORD, teach us to order our days and give us a heart of wisdom! Help us to place our trust completely in You. O satisfy us with Your Loving-kindness in the morning, now before we are older! Set our feet upon Your path and make Your footsteps into our pathway! Show us Your work, that mighty manifestation of Your power in our lives! Let the beauty, delightfulness and favor of the LORD be upon us. Confirm and establish the work of our hands! Ps. 90: 12,14-17

Digging Deeper in the Word: As we study God's guidance today, let us seek to keep this word picture in our minds of our LORD as our personal shepherd leading and guiding us. Ask Him to help you roll those cares and burdens onto Him. There are a lot of verses to look up for this lesson. You might find it useful to choose a certain color or distinctive code and mark all of the verses in your Bible related to God's guidance as you go through the lesson. Meditate and pray through the verses as you seek to apply them to your life and your circumstances.

1. Do you think we can know what the right thing is to do by ourselves? What do these verses tell us about our ability to know what is right? Isa. 55:8-9; Prov. 16:9, 25; Prov. 21:2; Jer. 10:23
2. When we do not know what path to take, what are some of the things that we should do?

2 Chr. 20:12	Eyes on the LORD
James 1:5	Pray for wisdom
Prov. 3:5	Trust in the LORD with all your heart/don't depend on own wisdom
Prov. 4:26	Watch the path of your feet.
Prov. 8:34	Listen to the LORD attentively
Ps. 25:4-5	Pray for God to teach you His ways
Ps. 5:8	Pray for God to make our paths straight.

3. How does keeping our eyes on the LORD affect our ability to be guided by Him? 2 Chron. 20:12; Ps. 25:15; Ps. 121:1-2; Ps. 123:1-2; Ps. 141:8

4. Let's look specifically at God's guidance and think about the implications of how He guides:

2 Chr. 32:22 What does the idea of being guided on every side" mean?

Prov. 16:9
Prov. 3:26
Prov. 4:11
Prov 20:24
Isa. 48:17
Isa. 46:10

5. What kind of picture of God's guidance do you get from the account of Israel being led through the wilderness by God? How does this relate to His guidance of His people today, when we do not see a pillar of fire or a cloud? Do you see a connection between God's guidance, His protection and watchfulness over us? Deut. 1:33; 2:7; 8:2; Ex. 15:13; 1 Cor. 10:6,11; Deut. 32:1-4, 10-14
6. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our guidance as Christians under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ? John 16:13
7. What are some of God's promises related to His directions for our lives?: Isaiah 30:21; Isa. 42:16; Isa. 46:4; Isa. 49:10; Isa. 58:11; Prov. 3:6; Ps. 139:10; Prov. 16:3 ;Ps. 31:3-5; Ps. 32:8; Ps. 37:23; Ps. 48:10,14; Ps. 73:24
8. Meditation on the LORD as our Shepherd: Ps. 23; Isa. 40:11; John 10. Take some time to really think about these passages as they apply to your relationship with the LORD. What characteristics of a shepherd give us great comfort and security as one of His sheep?
9. Have you ever thought of how much faith is linked with God's guidance? Is this a fearful thing? Why or why wouldn't it be frightening to make decisions based on faith in God's guidance? What are some of the "dangers" that you can see?
10. Do you think there is a difference between putting confidence in "your faith" or trust in "the Father's faithfulness?" How can we tell the difference when we are making decisions? John 10:28

What is the Lord speaking to me?

What I want to say to the Lord:

Respond to the LORD by praying about what you have been learning about His guidance. You can remind Him of His promises-- not that He needs reminding--but because we open a way for the Word to come into our lives in a greater way when we ask that He fulfill His promises in us. Ask His forgiveness for any doubt or worry that you have experienced that He might not want to guide you in the big or small events of your life. Seek to be honest with the Lord about your doubts or fears. Often by bringing them into the light, they just evaporate like the morning dew.