

# Gospel-driven Guidance

Discovering God's plan  
for your life

3 Bible studies for individuals, groups & 1:1









- d. John 15:5-8
- e. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- f. 1 Corinthians 10:31
- g. Philippians 1:9-11
- h. 1 Peter 4:11
- i. (as a contrast, consider how Romans 1:21 describes the core issue of our sinfulness)
- j. (it's interesting to note that there are only two verses in the whole New Testament that specifically tell us what 'God's will' for us is, both in 1 Thessalonians: 1 Thess 4:3, 1 Thess 5:18)

3. Read Philippians 1:19-26

- a. How does verse 20 contrast our potential to be ashamed on one hand with glorifying Christ on the other?
- b. V21 makes a massive statement. From v22-26, what does Paul mean that 'to live is Christ'? What does he mean that 'to die is gain'?

## **Getting into the nitty gritty**

4. How do your priorities for your life stack up with God's priorities?
  
5. How do you feel about God's stated purpose that we should live for his glory?
  
6. If you are convinced 'to live is Christ and to die is gain' how might this radically reshape the way you approach plans and ambitions in life?
  
7. What is one aspect of your character that you would like to ask God to change for his glory?



## Study 3 – What God says about our choices: an expression of devotion

### Getting started

Discuss: what's more helpful if you get lost on a hiking trip – a compass or a map?

### Getting into the Bible

1. In the following two passages, what does Jesus urge us to shape our lives around?
  - a. Matthew 6:24-34
  - b. Mathew 13:44-46
  
2. How do the following passages connect the decisions we make in life with our faith in God's promises?
  - a. Hebrews 11:13-16
  
  
  - b. James 2:14-26
  
3. There are many examples of how God *has* guided in the past, and *can* guide if he chooses. List as many example from the Bible as you can think of.

4. Now read these passages and discuss how God *promises he will* guide:
  - a. Psalm 19:7-14
  - b. Psalm 119: 105, 129-136
  - c. 2 Tim 3:14-17
  - d. Hebrews 1:1-3
  - e. 2 Peter 1:2-4
  
5. If you're keen to dig deeper still, consider how these passages challenge us when we don't like the guidance that God has given us:
  - a. Romans 14:20-21
  - b. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11
  - c. Galatians 5:13-15
  - d. James 4:13-17

### **Getting into the nitty gritty**

6. How does having the end goal and big picture in mind impact the detail questions along the way?

7. What do you think is the biggest barrier(s) to you following the guidance that God provides?
  
8. The following quote comes from *Guidance and the Voice of God* by Phillip Jensen and Tony Payne (a book well worth reading!). Does what we have learned regarding God's guidance leave you feeling satisfied or wanting more? Unsettled or comforted? Why?

*In the past, many Christians have thought of God's will for them as like a finely-detailed map that plotted the course of the rest of their lives. The whole idea of 'guidance' was to find out which way to turn next so that we stayed on course, and followed the path that had already been mapped out for us.*

*Perhaps the best way to summarise our alternative to this view is to say that God's guidance is more like a compass than a map. We are not given the fine detail of every decision on every day for the rest of our lives. God doesn't want us to spend our time trying to discover the secrets of his will. He does indeed guide us through life 'behind the scenes', and every detail is known to him and under his sovereign control. He knows where he wants to take us, and he will get us there. But he does not provide us with a detailed map – he gives us a compass instead.*

*At every point along the journey, no matter where we are or what we are doing, we can consult the compass to see which direction to head. That direction is always towards righteousness and holiness and becoming like Christ. As Paul puts it: 'whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to*

*God the Father through him' (Col 3:17). At every step along the way, this is the direction God wants us to take, for that is the destination he is guiding us to – to be conformed finally to the image of Christ, to be submitted to him for all eternity, to inherit the unspoiling glory that belongs to the adopted children of God.*

*The compass is his own word to us: the Bible. It may not tell us every detail of every rock to step over, or whether to climb the mountain or tunnel through it, but it will constantly and unerringly point us to what God wants us to do every day of our lives. It will tell us what matters matter, and in what ways God wants us to lovingly obey him. It will also tell us, by implication, that some decisions (or aspects of decisions) are not matters of right and wrong, and that in these circumstances we can use the wisdom God has given us to make up our minds.*

*For those readers raised on the traditional approach to guidance – with its special wills and 'second bests' and fleeces and peaces – all this is no doubt quite radical. But it is also quite liberating.*

*We don't have to flounder around, tentatively making decisions, hoping that we are pleasing God and sticking to his plan. God's will is not something hidden that I have to unearth. It is all out in the open. The compass is quite clear.*

*Choosing may still be hard sometimes, because in our sinfulness we do not want to go God's way. Life will always be complex, and at times we will struggle to work out how to apply God's guidance from the Bible. However, we can face our journey with joy and confidence, because our Heavenly Father is watching over us every step of the way.*

As we conclude this series, you might like to reflect on and make use of this prayer from Sir Richard of Chichester, a church leader in England in the 1200s:

*'Dear Lord, three things I pray: to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day.'*

**Books worth reading:**

John Dickson *If I Were God, I'd Make Myself Clearer*

Scott Petty *The Bible*

Paul Barnett *Is the New Testament History?*

Jl Packer *Knowing God*

Kevin DeYoung *Just Do Something*

Phillip Jensen and Tony Payne *Guidance and the Voice of God*

John Piper *Don't Waste Your Life*

John Piper *Desiring God*

Os Guinness *The Call*







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