

## The Lord is my guide

We all need guidance throughout our lives. The guidance differs from stage to stage of our lives and also according to our various needs. Parents guide their children to learn to navigate their various stages of life. Children are guided to know what is right and what is wrong. They are guided in their choice of subjects at school, which university course to take and which university to go to. They are guided on relationship matters. Everyone received guidance in one form or another, formal or informal, good or bad. However when the Lord takes hold of our lives and becomes our Shepherd He guides us in the way He wants us to go for His name sake, which, by the way, benefits us.

Psalm 23: 1 – 3 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. **He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.**

### 1) The Lord is my guide

- There are many guides out in the world giving their own advice on how we should run our lives.
- Teenagers and young adults probably have the biggest problem with their peers pressurising them into going the wrong way.
  - Peer pressure guides them more than anything else. Their peers often override their parents, teachers, pastors and even common sense.
  - Everyone just wants to be accepted and would often be willing to be guided into a lion's den for that acceptance.
- This is exactly what Satan, the ultimate deceiver, does. He guides, leads us astray, onto paths of wickedness using our own sinful desires and fallen emotional requirements to do so.
  - James 1: 13 – 15 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.
  - This doesn't only apply to the aspect of sin but of every aspect of our fallen nature
  - We are easily led astray into sin because of our desire for acceptance, for companionship, for employment, for accommodation, etc.
  - The grass always seems to be greener on the other side – until you get there to find that weeds are also green and that's what you ended up with.
  - The prodigal son thought that having all the money and wealth would bring him all that he wanted in the world. That was until his careless lifestyle made him end up feeding the pigs and eating their pods.
- We can see how the wrong guidance, or lack of good guidance, can lead to our downfall.
  - Proverbs 11: 14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.
- The good news is that when God takes hold of our lives in Jesus He becomes our Good shepherd who guides us in the right way.
  - At the time of Jesus it was left to the shepherd to guide the sheep in the right way. These days farmers use sheep dogs to round up the sheep and to guide them back to their sheep folds. If we've seen how these dogs operate they run around the sheep herding them in the direction they want the sheep to go.
- God gently herds us in the way that He wants us to go.
- He guides us using His word
  - Psalm 119: 105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.
- He guides us by His Spirit.
  - John 16: 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

## 2) The Lord guides me in righteousness

- He guides me on right paths, on the paths of righteousness, in righteousness.
  - These are different ways this verse is translated and they can all be correct.
- The word for paths could be translated trenches. In other words God entrenches us in the way of righteousness.
  - This means that God doesn't merely tell us to walk in righteousness or show us how to live in righteousness. He roots us in righteousness.
- Jesus took our sin and gave us His righteousness.
  - 2 Corinthians 5: 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
  - This is what we call imputed righteousness. We were made righteous by the work of Jesus on the cross. The divine exchange.
  - By being made righteous we are put into a right relationship with God who is righteous. Without having been made righteous we can't be in a right relationship with Him as He will only relate to those who are righteous so He did what we couldn't do for ourselves – made us righteous so that we can be reconciled with Him.
- Spiritually righteousness has been imputed to us and we are righteous in God's sight through the blood of Jesus, however practically and experientially we are far from perfect righteousness.
- It is because of this that God has to guide us in the path of righteousness. He has to train us in His ways of righteousness.
  - 2 Timothy 3: 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.
  - Hebrews 5: 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.
- We have to be trained in the way of righteousness.
- We cannot claim to be righteous by the blood of Jesus then live as we want.
  - 1 John 3: 7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.
- As the world would try lead us astray into sin and the ways of the world God comes alongside us and guides us in the way of righteousness until righteousness becomes our nature and our sinful nature desists

## 3) The Lord guides me for His honour

- Although we do benefit from His righteousness He doesn't guide us in righteousness for us but for the glory and honour of His name.
  - Philippians 1: 9 – 11 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.
- As the world looks at us living righteous lives that are contrary to the ways of the world they will realise that we are different and live contrary to the ways of the world.
  - 1 Corinthians 10: 31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
  - Matthew 15: 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- God is glorified in the way we conduct ourselves in the world and not by merely attending church, praying and doing whatever normally happens in the church.
- He is glorified when His people live righteous lives in the midst of wickedness.
  - Jesus went against the stream of contemporary society and He calls us to do the same when we follow Him.
  - It isn't just going against the stream but letting the world know that we're going against the stream of society, rooted in righteous living because of the name of Jesus
- It's for the sake of His name – the name above all names – Jesus