

Counting on God's Guidance

Message 01 of the series, "Numbers: Counting on God"

I. God wants to guide us.

- a. God guided the Israelites through the wilderness.

"On the day the Tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered it. But from evening until morning the cloud over the Tabernacle looked like a pillar of fire. This was the regular pattern—at night the cloud that covered the Tabernacle had the appearance of fire. Whenever the cloud lifted from over the sacred tent, the people of Israel would break camp and follow it. And wherever the cloud settled, the people of Israel would set up camp. In this way, they traveled and camped at the LORD's command wherever he told them to go." Numbers 9:15-18 (NLT)

"The LORD went ahead of them. He guided them during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night." Exodus 13:21 (NLT)

Note: The pillar of cloud/fire was a theophany, a visible manifestation of God.

- b. God will guide us if we are willing to follow Him.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name." Psalm 23:1-3 (NLT)

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

Note: Following Jesus means having an ongoing personal relationship with Him.

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 (NLT)

"Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am."

John 12:26 (NLT)

- c. God will guide us if we are willing to wait on His timing.

"If the cloud remained over the Tabernacle for a long time, the Israelites stayed and performed their duty to the LORD. Sometimes the cloud would stay over the Tabernacle for only a few days, so the people would stay for only a few days, as the LORD commanded. Then at the LORD's command they would break camp and move on. Sometimes the cloud stayed only overnight and lifted the next morning. But day or night, when the cloud lifted, the people broke camp and moved on. Whether the cloud stayed above the Tabernacle for two days, a month, or a year, the people of Israel stayed in camp and did not move on. But as soon as it lifted, they broke camp and moved on." Numbers 9:19-22 (NLT)

"Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act... Put your hope in the LORD. Travel steadily along his path." Psalm 37:7, 34 (NLT)

II. God wants us to know His will.

- a. God spoke to Moses out loud inside the tabernacle and revealed His will.

"Whenever Moses went into the Tabernacle to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the Ark's cover—the place of atonement—that rests on the Ark of the Covenant. The LORD spoke to him from there." Numbers 7:89 (NLT)

"Moses and Aaron were among his priests... They cried to the LORD for help, and he answered them. He spoke to Israel from the pillar of cloud, and they followed the laws and decrees he gave them. O LORD our God, you answered them." Psalm 99:6-8 (NLT)

Note: Through the Holy Spirit we have much better access to God than Moses did!

"Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?" 1 Corinthians 6:19 (NLT)

"On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit...." Acts 2:1-4 (NLT)

b. God regularly speaks to us and reveals His will in four ways:

- *God speaks to us through the Bible.* “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)
- *God speaks to us through prayer.* “Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.” Psalm 5:3 (NLT)
- *God speaks to us through godly counsel.* “Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.” Colossians 3:16 (NLT)
- *God speaks to us through circumstances.* “When I came to the city of Troas to preach the Good News of Christ, the Lord opened a door of opportunity for me.” 2 Corinthians 2:12 (NLT)

c. God will speak to us often if we are willing to surrender control.

“So they camped or traveled at the LORD’s command, and they did whatever the LORD told them through Moses.” Numbers 9:23 (NLT)

The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.”

Psalm 32:8-9 (NLT)

III. God wants what’s best for us more than we do!

“The LORD your God is going ahead of you. He will fight for you, just as you saw him do in Egypt. And you saw how the LORD your God cared for you all along the way as you traveled through the wilderness, just as a father cares for his child. Now he has brought you to this place. But even after all he did, you refused to trust the LORD your God, who goes before you looking for the best places to camp, guiding you with a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day.” Deuteronomy 1:30-33 (NLT)

Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. What causes a person to read ‘instructions’? At what point, when putting something together or installing something, do you read the instructions?
2. One of Centerpoint’s values states that the Bible is our guide in all matters of faith and practice. Why do you think that is? Do you believe that statement to be true? If so, how do you utilize it in your everyday life?
3. Read Psalm 32:8-9. What must you allow for someone to be able to lead you? Why is it difficult to surrender control of your life decisions?
4. God reveals His will to us in four ways: through the Bible, prayer, Godly counsel and circumstances. Which of these do you believe is the most consistent way God reveals His plans for you? How would you describe how God uses each of these in your life?
5. Read the following lyrics of the classic hymn “Trust and Obey” by John H. Sammis.

“When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will, He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, but our toil He doth richly repay; not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross, but is blessed if we trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet, or we'll walk by His side in the way; what He says we will do, where He sends we will go; never fear, only trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

Do these lyrics describe your relationship with God? Why? Why not? What would it take for us to really trust and obey God in every part of our lives?

Quotations to consider:

"If you are ignorant of God's Word, you will always be ignorant of God's will." Billy Graham

"Being a Christian is less about cautiously avoiding sin than about courageously and actively doing God's will."
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." John 13:7 (NLT)

"God will ensure my success in accordance with his plan, not mine." Francis Chan

"Take one day at a time. Today, after all, is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday." Billy Graham