

Three Ways God Leads:

By Revelation

1. God desires to reveal himself, and his ways to us!!!
2. Briefly open with salvation testimony.
 - a. Keep it short
 - b. **God changed the direction of my life that day!**
3. **Acts 16:6 – 10**
 - a. Read or quote Scripture
 - b. **God changed the direction of Paul's life that night**
 - c. He changed the course of the history of mankind, as this was the first time the Gospel was preached in Europe.
 - d. For much of the rest of Paul's life he ministered in Europe, all the result of this one revelation!
4. Supernatural Revelation is a key way that God directs His people
 - a. Dreams, visions, prophecy, audible voice of God,
 - b. Philip in **Acts 8:26-40**
 - i. Angel told him to go down the desert road to Gaza
 - ii. Spirit told him to overtake a chariot there
 - iii. Then after baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch the Spirit of the Lord "caught Philip away" actually transported him to Azotus to preach the Gospel there!
 - c. That would probably be the most AGGRESSIVE form of leading – God taking you by the nap of your neck and dragging you!
5. Does this type of leading happen today, or was it just for Biblical times?
 - a. I personally have been led many times through visions, dreams and prophecies.
 - b. I have not heard the audible voice of the Lord, but have heard many testimonies of others who have
 - c. I have not been physically transported, but have also heard a good number of testimonies from missionaries who have experienced this.
6. Is this type of leading "Biblical?"
 - The Bible is the #1 source of revelation
 - All revelations must be submitted to the objective word of God
 - If you desire to increase in subjective revelation you MUST increase in the objective revelation (knowing & understanding The Bible).
 - [Amo 3:7 NKJV](#) Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.
 - [Psa 95:7 NKJV](#) For He *is* our God, And we *are* the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice:
 - [Joh 10:27 NKJV](#) **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**
 - Although there are people with the gift of prophecy that may hear God supernaturally in a more frequent and dramatic way, each and every one of us are "His sheep" and are promised in the Bible that we would hear His voice
 - Because the use of many forms of revelation are used consistently throughout all of Scripture, which itself ends in the most revelatory book of all

- “Revelations” -- what is not “Biblical” is to deny that God leads through revelation!
7. The more dramatic the Revelation, the more drastic the change required/intended
 - a. I had a dramatic revelation that changed me from a non-believer to a believer. The ENTIRE course of my life was changed.
 - b. Paul had a dramatic revelation that led him to a whole new continent. The rest of his life was changed.
 - c. Most often God leads in small steps. If we’re waiting for a major revelation to be lead in some simple thing – it will likely never come
 - d. **We should not demand a “sign from God” to get us to do what He’s plainly told us to do.**
 8. Paul was already “in motion”
 - a. Paul’s example is very important
 - b. He tried to go into Asia – but was forbidden
 - c. Then he tried to go to Bithynia, and again was not permitted
 - d. Paul didn’t sit around doing nothing until God supernaturally led him
 - e. Paul wasn’t afraid to make mistakes
 - f. Because Paul was IN MOTION, God was able to steer him.
 9. Application
 - a. God leads supernaturally
 - b. We need to be open to this, believe God for it, and know how to respond when we experience it.
 - c. Learn how to receive a prophetic word
 - d. Learn how to understand your dreams
 - e. Learn how to see the spiritual significance of things in your life
 - f. As I will delve into more later, we need to learn how to “judge” a revelation, whether it be a prophetic word, dream, or whatever – we need to know how to interpret our subjective experiences with the objective Word of God.
 - g. But if we want to experience this, we need to get moving
 - h. Eccl 9:10, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might;”

Three Legged Stool Illustration

Each of the three ways is like a leg of a stool, with one leg, you may be able to balance something briefly, or lean on it. But it is not stable enough to carry any weight for long.

Three Ways God Leads:

(Part 2) By Conviction

[Php 2:12-13 NKJV](#) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; [13](#) for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

1. The second means by which God lead us is our convictions
 - a) By convictions I do not want us simply to think of when we feel convicted of sin or doing something wrong
 - b) But rather the more general, and more positive understanding of what we believe to be true and right, what we are convinced of
 - This applies to everything from abstract ideas, such as our belief in the merits of one political system over another
 - To the specific and practical convictions of daily disciplines of brushing your teeth, and reading the Bible, etc.
2. Paul uses to different Greek words in this verse that are both translated in the English as “work”
 - a) In vs. 12, “work out your own salvation...”
 - This is a clear and unambiguous command that tells us we are responsible for the “working out” of our own salvation
 - No one else can do this for us
 - Nor can we do it for another
 - The word translated here is *Katergazomai, kat-er-gad'-zom-ahee*
 - From [G2596](#) and [G2038](#); to *work fully*, that is, *accomplish*; by implication to *finish, fashion*: - cause, do (deed), perform, work (out).
 - We are called to work out what God has worked in us.
 - b) In vs. 13, “for it is God who works in you”
 - This is likewise clear and unambiguous concerning what and how we are to “work out.”
 - The word translated here is *energeo, be active, efficient*: - do, (be) effectual (fervent), be mighty; to be operative, be at work, put forth power
 - *energeo*, is the greek root from which we get the word: energy,
3. JFB commentary
 - a) **Php 2:13 For**--encouragement to work: "For it is God who worketh in you," always present with you, though I be absent. **It is not said, "Work out your own salvation, though it is God," &c., but, "because it is God who,"** &c. The will, and the power to work, being first instalments of His grace, encourage us to make full proof of, and carry out to the end, the "salvation" which He has first "worked," and is still "working in" us, enabling us to "work it out." "Our will does nothing thereunto without grace; but grace is inactive without our will" [ST. BERNARD]. Man is, in different senses, entirely active, and entirely passive: God producing all, and we acting all. What He produced is our own acts. It is not that God does some, and we the rest. God does all, and we do all. God is the only proper author, we the only proper actors. Thus the same things in Scripture are represented as from God, and from us. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart; not

merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty ([Eze 11:19](#); [Eze 18:31](#); [Eze 36:26](#)) [EDWARDS].

4. Clarke commentary

a) **Php 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you** - Every holy purpose, pious resolution, good word, and good work, must come from him; ye must be workers together with him, that ye receive not his grace in vain; because he worketh in you, therefore work with him, and work out your own salvation.

To will and to do - *Το θελειν και το ενεργειν*. The power to will and the power to act must necessarily come from God, who is the author both of the soul and body, and of all their powers and energies, but the act of volition and the act of working come from the man. God gives power to will, man wills through that power; God gives power to act, and man acts through that power. Without the power to will, man can will nothing; without the power to work, man can do nothing. God neither wills for man, nor works in man's stead, but he furnishes him with power to do both; he is therefore accountable to God for these powers. Because God works in them the power to will and the power to do, therefore the apostle exhorts them to work out their own salvation; most manifestly showing that the use of the powers of volition and action belongs to themselves. They cannot do God's work, they cannot produce in themselves a power to will and to do; and God will not do their work, he will not work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Though men have grievously puzzled themselves with questions relative to the will and power of the human being; yet no case can be plainer than that which the apostle lays down here: the power to will and do comes from God; the use of that power belongs to man. He that has not got this power can neither will nor work; he that has this power can do both. But it does not necessarily follow that he who has these powers will use them; the possession of the powers does not necessarily imply the use of those powers, because a man might have them, and not use or abuse them; therefore the apostle exhorts: Work out your own salvation. This is a general exhortation; it may be applied to all men, for to all it is applicable, there not being a rational being on the face of the earth, who has not from God both power to will and act in the things which concern his salvation. Hence the accountableness of man.

5. "Will"

Thayer Definition: G2309 *thelō / ethelō*

- 1) to will, have in mind, intend
- 1a) to be resolved or determined, to purpose
- 1b) to desire, to wish
- 1c) to love
- 1c1) to like to do a thing, be fond of doing
- 1d) to take delight in, have pleasure

a) This is what we now commonly call our convictions

- What we believe to be true
- What we intend to do
- What we are resolved about
- What we desire and love
- What we take pleasure in

b) All of these things are what we are to "work out" using the power of God that is in us

Okay, now that we have some idea about the Biblical basis for this, let's look at how we might apply it in our lives.

1. "God do you want me to go to church today and if so where?"
 - a. Why would this be absurd for a pastor but acceptable for a regular Christian?
 - i. "Father, do you want me to go to work today, or should I call in sick?"
 - ii. "God do you want me to love my wife and kids?"
 - iii. "God should I witness to my co-workers?"
 - iv. "God should I give to the offering?"
 - v. "God should I stop stealing?"
 - vi. "God do you want me to help out at church?"
 - vii. Etc., etc. etc.
 - b. Many, perhaps most, of the questions we ask God for concerning life decisions are matters of conviction, not revelation.
2. How about this situation...
 - a. What would be the right thing to do if a revelation from the Holy Spirit conflicted with a heart felt conviction?
 - b. How about if you "felt" led to do something and a respected prophet actually prophesied for you to do something different?
 - c. Paul experienced this very thing.
 - i. Acts 21:4; 10-15
 - ii. We don't know how this conviction in Paul's heart was formed
 - iii. But even when "told... through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem" he was unmoved
 - iv. **Conviction has greater authority than revelation!**
 - d. Did Paul do the right thing?
 - i. **Acts 23:11**, "*But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."*
 - ii. YES
 - e. Why would God do this?
 - i. I don't know
 - ii. God is not a machine – He's a real person
 - iii. God wants us to go deeper than mechanical obedience,
 1. He wants to develop our character
 2. He wants us to be men and women of conviction
 3. So He will test, and prove, our character by leading us into circumstances that will strengthen our convictions
 - f. **God set the direction of Paul's life by his convictions**
3. Application
 - a. Our convictions **MUST** be formed by God's word

- Daily reading God's word
- Meditating on God's word every day
- Digging deeper through study
- Gain a good overall understanding of
 - the Bible as a whole
 - Each section of the Bible
 - Each book of the Bible
- Do in depth study of particular topics and sections
- As we learned last week the subjective must be subject to the objective
- b. Often we demand a revelation before doing the will of the Lord out of a desire to preserve our lives, or our comfort, to maintain the status quo.
 - i. If this is the case, can we really expect God to “perform” a supernatural revelation for us
 - ii. Paul's example was that he did not value his life (comfort, safety) more than his convictions.
 - iii. Acts 21:13, “for I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”
 - iv. **Mark 8:11-12**, “*Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. 12 But He **sighed deeply in His spirit**, and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.”*
 - v. **Ask yourself before you seek a sign, “will this cause Jesus to “sigh deeply in His spirit?”**
 - vi. God will not be manipulated by our lack of faith. He is calling us to become men and women that are EASILY led, not resistant.
- c. The Key then is
 - i. Allow your convictions to be formed by God’s Word
 - ii. Then respect those convictions
 - iii. “Work out our own salvation, because it is God who works in us the power and energy to will and to do what is pleasing to Him, and approved by Him.”
 - iv. Most [All?] revelations CONFIRM our convictions – because God wants us to be led first by our convictions.
 - v. And if we are, then He is free to give us greater revelations that will enable us to fulfill our convictions in a greater way!

Three Legged Stool Illustration

Leg 1 = Revelation

Leg 2 = Conviction

Elaborate on the illustration

Three Ways God Leads -- Part 3

By Leadership (Kind of makes sense that God might use leaders to lead)

1. One of the experiences that has changed my life, and the course of my ministry has been going to Florida with my wife, to receive a week of prayer counseling.
 - a. God didn't tell me to do it.
 - b. Fred Wright did. (Fred Wright lead our association of churches)
 - c. This was not what I expected. It was about 10 years ago. Fred and Sharon Wright were here as we had recently become affiliated with Partners In Harvest.
 - d. They came over to our house for a meal and Kathie and I shared with them some issues we were facing.
 - i. They didn't try to answer our issues
 - ii. But they did give us specific direction: Go to Florida and receive this ministry
 - iii. In doing so Kathie and I experienced some significant emotional/spiritual healing
 - iv. And we were introduced to a form of ministry that has shaped our church. "Restoration of our emotional, physical and spiritual wholeness" as a core value of New Day is directly a result of what we experienced at this ministry.
 - v. **God changed the direction of my life, through the leading of Fred Wright who was in authority over me.**
2. **Acts 15:22**, "*Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas,*
 - a. Paul returned to Jerusalem and submitted his ministry to the leaders of the Church
 - b. James made a decision concerning the Gentiles, and the apostles and elders chose to send Paul and the others back to the Gentile churches to distribute this message.
 - c. **Clarke: Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole Church** - James determined what ought to be done; and the whole assembly resolved how that should be done.
 - d. **God directed Paul's life and ministry through the decision of those in leadership.**
 - e. James didn't ask Paul if he felt "led" to go back to the churches.
 - f. Paul didn't tell James, well I'll pray about it.
 - g. In fact this is the most common way Paul operated
 - i. Throughout Acts and the Epistles we see him giving specific direction to those he was over
 - ii. He sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, Acts 19:22
 - iii. He sent Timothy to Corinth, 1 Corinthians 4:17
 - iv. He left Titus in Crete, Titus 1:5, "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city **as I commanded** you
3. Paul received the Macedonian revelation while he was being obedient to the direction of the apostles and elders!

- a. It was while he was on this journey, being sent out by the leadership of the Church, that he had the vision.
 - b. I believe that obedience to God appointed leadership opens up the opportunity to receive Revelatory leading.
 - c. If Paul had declined, he never would have opened Europe to the Gospel.
 - d. **Luke 19:17**, *"And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'*
 - i. If we want to be entrusted with greater revelation we must be faithful with what we're given.
 - ii. Submission to those in authority over us is a key test that God uses to see if we're ready for greater responsibility.
 - iii. So often Christian waste their lives waiting for some grand revelation, but neglecting to do the simple things they're asked to do.
 - iv. God wants to do GREAT things in your life, but greatness begins with small tasks.
4. Obey Spiritual Leaders
- **Heb 13:17 NLT** Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.
 - **Heb 13:17 MSG** Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel. They are alert to the condition of your lives and work under the strict supervision of God. Contribute to the joy of their leadership, not its drudgery. Why would you want to make things harder for them?
 - **Rom 12:8 NKJV** he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.
 - **Rom 12:8 NLT** If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.
 - **Eph 4:11-12 NLT** Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ.
5. Application
- a. SEE THE CONNECTION
 - b. By faith, can you see that when you're asked to do children's ministry, this may be God wanting to see if you're faithful to someday plant a church?
 - c. The very first thing that we asked Ron Cipic to oversee, years ago, was the nursery.
 - i. He did a great job.
 - ii. He never complained about being asked to do something he wasn't "called" to do
 - iii. As he was faithful he was given more responsibility.
 - iv. Now look. God is using him and Kim to plant an awesome church in Grand Rapids!

- d. Scott & Stephanie likewise were willing to do anything and everything I asked them to do, from painting the walls, to kids ministry, etc.
- e. You'll never have to worry about God using you to fulfill your hearts desire, if you are diligent to do all you can to fulfill HIS desires.
 - i. This is really an issue of trust
 - ii. More than an issue of obedience.
 - iii. Do we trust God's ability to steer the course of our lives?
 - iv. If so, being led by those over us, being led by our convictions, and being open to His Revelations will position us to do GREAT THINGS.

Three Legged Stool Illustration

Add the third leg of the stool.

Leg 1 = Revelation

Leg 2 = Conviction

Leg 3 = Leadership

- Discuss the relationship between each of the three "legs"
- Discuss the imbalance if one is missing or the wrong length
- Discuss how to grow in each area
 - Increase revelation by seeking it out, learning how God reveals supernaturally (I.e. join the hearing God's Voice Life Group, go to a conference, read a book, listen to teachings, etc.)
 - Increase Conviction through reading & studying God's word
 - [Rom 12:2 NKJV](#) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
 - Increase Leadership by
 - Doing what you are asked, or told to do with excellence
 - Knowing the vision and heart of those in leadership so well that you know what need to be done and do it without being asked or told
 - Being EASY to correct, and not defensive
 - Understanding that if you are committed to fulfilling the vision of those God has put over you, that will release them to help you fulfill your God's vision for YOU!!!