

I. Three Harbor Lights

- A. Bob Mumford in his book *“Take Another Look at Guidance”*, compares discovering God's will with a sea captain's docking procedure: A certain harbor in Italy can be reached only by sailing up a narrow channel between dangerous rocks and shoals. Over the years, many ships have been wrecked, and navigation is hazardous. To guide the ships safely into port, three lights have been mounted on three huge poles in the harbor. When the three lights are perfectly lined up and seen as one, the ship can safely proceed up the narrow channel. If the pilot sees two or three lights, he knows he's off course and in danger.
- B. Bob Mumford also writes about how God has provided three beacons to guide us. The same rules of navigation apply—the three lights must be lined up before it is safe for us to proceed. The three harbor lights of guidance are:

1. The Word of God (objective standard)

- a) The Word of God is always the supreme criteria in order to discern the voice of God. His Word gives us vast information about who He is and what He is like, with this information in place it is easy to discern direct contrasts to His nature and character. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- b) His commands in His Word must become the spirit of our personal integrity. With this Godly integrity in place many possible voices are immediately silenced.

“The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.”(Pro. 11:3)

2. The Holy Spirit (subjective witness)

- a) There are multiple examples of the Holy Spirit speaking to the apostolic church in the book of Acts and other New Testament writings. We are seldom told how the Holy Spirit spoke in those passages. However, when you look at the vast range of personalities within the body of Christ it would seem strange that He would speak the same way to all.

- b) One of the most powerful aspects of the witness of the Holy Spirit is the confirmation of others. Wisdom is found in the multitude of counselors, and there is such assurance for the soul found in the support of the community of believers. (Pro. 11:4, 15:22, 24:6; Acts 6:4-5, 15:22-25)
 - Seek out counsel from 2 or 3 individuals who love you and pray for you, and invite them to speak into the situation.
 - If it's possible try to seek counsel from individuals who are unbiased to the decision.
- c) The primary biblical ways in which the Holy Spirit Speaks to you and others are.....
 - a) Impressions
 - b) Dreams
 - c) Visions
 - d) Giving Peace

Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. (Acts 16:6)

3. Circumstances (divine providence)

- a) Circumstances cannot stand by themselves for a light to divine guidance, but must line up with the first 2 harbor lights. We must never overlook our circumstances, and they must always be a strong factor for guidance.
- b) God uses circumstances to guide humanity as a whole and it should not be any different for us personally. Comfortable circumstances do not necessarily mean that we are in God's will, in fact many times it is the opposite. Biblically, God often uses negative circumstances to speak to us and mature us in love. There are 5 main sources of negative circumstances all of which must be met by Godly responses to lead us deeper into relationship with Him

- God is refining/testing you.... Ask for endurance and for the Holy Spirit to produce eternal fruit in you
- You are reaping the wages of your poor choices or sin..... Repent of your poor choices or sin
- You are being attacked by Satan..... Close any doors that allowed satanic influence and Resist the attack.
- You are being persecuted for righteousness.....Pray for endurance and consider it joy and validation of what Jesus is producing in you.
- Elements under the curse of Sin..... Institute the Gospel of the Kingdom and use these circumstances to develop a longing for the return and reign of Jesus.

II. Common Sense

- A. Even if you apply all of the guidelines we covered this morning in your quest to be led by the voice of God it is still very possible to get it wrong and make choices that God did not lead you to make. Be cautious to say "GOD TOLD ME" – However, most of us are guilty of invoking His voice and then changing our plans. There is nothing wrong with simply making a decision based upon good wisdom and Godly values, you do not need to invoke divine guidance to validate it.
- B. He gave us minds and He wants us to use them to evaluate the consequences of our actions. The Scriptures tell us many times to have sound judgment. Paul, for example, stayed where there were open doors (Ephesus) and left when his life was threatened.
- C. However, common sense has its limitations and it should never be our only method for discerning God's guidance. There are times when He leads people do things that are contrary to our concept of good judgment. We are generally too nearsighted to see the bigger picture. Because we see such a small part of the puzzle, we should always be willing to submit our thoughts and plans to His.

The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps (Pro. 16:9)