

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 57

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/

Topic: The Initiatives of Heaven - 3

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Yesterday we saw that the initiatives of Heaven are the way that God guides us so that we end up being in the right place, with the right people, doing the right thing, at the right time, and getting the right results.

By being sensitive to God's guidance through our conscience and our spiritual senses we become attuned to God's immediate agenda in that present moment. This helps us to know what to do and how to do it.

Just to clarify, there are three types of guidance that I see in Scripture and they all work together for the glory of God:

a) Knowledge of the Scriptures is God's macro-guidance and gives us wisdom that we can apply in many different situations. It is Scripture that equips the man of God to minister effectively (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Scripture is primary and authoritative.

b) A sense of gifting and calling such as "I am called to be an apostle to the Gentiles" is God's medium range guidance. This kind of guidance forms our identity, training, skill sets and outlook. It tells us who we are, and what we can do in the body of Christ and gives us our sense of "role".

c) The initiatives of Heaven are God's 'micro-guidance' and position us correctly within our role and circumstances so that we end up being in the right place, with the right people, doing the right thing, at the right time, and getting the right results

Lets apply this to the case we saw yesterday of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

1. Philip had a calling as an evangelist that he was fulfilling in Samaria.
2. The initiatives of Heaven repositioned Philip so that he was taken out of Samaria and sent to Gaza – this was accomplished via an angel telling him to go to Gaza and the Holy Spirit telling him to join the chariot. This resulted in Philip being in the right place, with the right people, doing the right thing, at the right time.
3. The eunuch was reading Isaiah 53 so Philip used his equipping and knowledge of the Scriptures to be an effective minister of grace who rightly divided the Word of God – and thus led the eunuch to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

So Philip had to be a) moving in his calling and b) equipped with the Scriptures so that he could be c)repositioned by God's micro-guidance into a highly strategic and effective situation. There are many faithful men and women of God who are well-equipped with Bible training and who are definitely called and moving in their calling but who are seeing very little fruit in their ministry. They need God's micro-guidance!

God's micro-guidance, which we are calling the initiatives of Heaven, are daily downloads of God's priorities for action. They are short-term and immediate and the apostles acted on them pretty much straight away (except for Peter who let the men from Cornelius stay overnight before heading out with them possibly because they needed the rest – Acts 10:23).

Again lets look at some incidents in Acts chapter 5:

Acts 5:15-21 MKJV *So as to carry out the sick into the streets and place them on cots and mattresses, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. (16) And also a multitude came from the cities around Jerusalem, bringing sick ones, and those being tormented by unclean spirits, who were all healed. (17) And rising up, the high priest, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) were filled with anger, (18) And laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the public custody. (19) But the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors by night and brought them out, and said, (20) Go! Stand and speak all the words of this Life to the people in the temple. (21) And hearing, they went into the temple about dawn, and taught.....*

Peter and the apostles are having a mighty healing ministry and this enrages the envious High Priest who then throws the apostles in prison. An angel brings them out by night and says to them: *Go! Stand and speak all the words of this Life to the people in the temple.* They obeyed the angel's instructions immediately. And so at dawn they went right back into the territory of the High Priest (the Temple) and preached and taught the gospel.

This instruction was for all the apostles, on that day, in order for them to bear witness to Christ. Later they would travel all over the Roman Empire, but on this day they were to be in the Temple teaching. This was the right place at the right time for the purposes of the Kingdom of God. However this 'Temple preaching' was not to be the pattern for all time. It was an immediate instruction for 'that hour' and was understood as such. Later they would preach in synagogues and marketplaces and houses and on desert roads.

The initiatives of Heaven are God's daily guidance, His tactical operations to defeat the enemy of our souls. God might wake you up in the middle of the night to pray for someone – don't go back to sleep! Obey the prompting and pray through to victory! God might prompt you to warn a co-worker about an inappropriate relationship that could wreck her marriage – speak up before it is too late!

The initiatives of Heaven are not complex. They are generally just a few words, a sentence or a short paragraph at most such as: "Join the Chariot" "Go, stand and speak ..." etc. They are God's quick touch on our life telling us to do (or in some cases not to do) a certain thing.

Not obeying a prompting can be costly. Rick Renner tells the story of his time in Moscow when he was supposed to attend a farewell function but felt very strongly that the Spirit was telling him to stay in his hotel room. He went to the function but returned after a while due to the urgency of the feeling, only to find the room trashed and burgled at a large loss to themselves and the ministry. He wrote saying that if he has obeyed the nudge from God then this would not have occurred.

I have had experiences where not listening to a prompting about consuming certain food has made me ill, and even one where I was burgled under very similar circumstances!

If we want to be a blessing to others, avoid danger and have optimal effectiveness in ministry we need to be incredibly sensitive and obedient to these leadings of the Holy Spirit.

Now this leads to the question: What about those goofy people who claim to be led by the Spirit but just seem to be rather irresponsible and self-centered individuals? Are you asking us to be like them?

No, of course not. People take advantage of every teaching of Scripture and some claim a new leading from God every time life gets difficult. Just because a few people abuse this doctrine or make it very legalistic, it does not mean that we should throw it out altogether!

God leads! God guides! And God speaks to his children about many aspects of their lives! In the next study we will look at how to hear the initiatives of Heaven for our own life and ministry.

Blessings,

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