

How We Can Know the Will of God

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The book of Isaiah, 48th chapter. Isaiah 48, verse 17. Thus saith Jehovah thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am Jehovah thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go. Now the words, the word Lord in capital letters, twice used here, Jehovah of course. I am Jehovah thy God. I teach thee to profit. I lead thee by the way that thou shouldst go.

Now I said that I would tonight talk to you about how to discover the will of God for your life. And this is one of two of most asked questions. When a new man comes, an evangelist or a Bible teacher goes somewhere and appears before an audience, and people come to him and say, I'd like a word with you. You can be sure, or at least it's very probable, that he will ask, how can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? Or how can I be sure of God's will for my life? Sometime again I'll come back around to talk on that first question. How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? But tonight, I want to talk about how I can be sure that I have the will of God for my life.

Now the text is very plain, and the embarrassment of getting a text or choosing a text to talk on this matter is that there is so much Scripture, so many passages of Scripture, that you are embarrassed for the abundance of them rather than for the absence of them. And in the text it says that Jehovah is God and He teaches us to profit, and He leads us in the way that we should go.

Now the first thing that I will say to you is that you're going to have to start believing something. And one of the things you're going to have to believe is that God is willing to lead you and teach you, and that it is for your eternal profit this side of the grave and beyond. God doesn't do things halfway. He has in mind our present and our future. And He leads us and teaches us to profit for our good in this side of death and on the other side. And that's the only two sides there are.

Now this is basic to successful Christian living. You see, you've always got to be fighting your tendency, as I have, to plunge into paganism and think as a Christian in a pagan manner. For we have absorbed from paganism the notion that God is a testy and exacting God. Jesus used a word about it, austere: very hard and logical and legal and tough to get along with.

And we have absorbed this from paganism, American paganism, that God is testy and churlish and that He enjoys seeing us squirm. The whole idea of penance is built on that, that God enjoys seeing us squirm, that God is altogether such a one as we are. God complained about that once. He said, thou thoughtest I was altogether like you.

And that's wrong because God is exactly the opposite from that. And we have absorbed the idea that God will punish us sternly and that he will somehow beat and chasten and flail the badness out of us. And our sense of guilt helps this and makes us feel this, because our sense of guilt makes us bring in a verdict that we ought to be punished.

And the man is not of what we call under conviction for sin until he believes that he ought to be punished. The man who doesn't believe he ought to go to hell will never go to heaven because it is one of the requisites of repentance that we believe that we ought to perish except by the mercy of God. And because we have this guilty feeling that we ought to be punished, why, we won't forgive ourselves and we'll not really believe that God has forgiven us. We punish ourselves. The psychologists have names for these things, and to some degree theology has also.

But the refusal to forgive yourself, the idea that you ought not to be led, that you're not the one, that this is all right for saints, but you're not the one because you ought to be punished. Well, of course you should. But as Eckhart says, this notion, that is, I want to quote him on one sentence, but he says about this notion that God is testy and exacting, he says, the Lord wants His friends to be rid of such notions. I think he's perfectly right.

The Lord wants his friends to be rid of such notions, for the truth is that God is all goodness and mercy and delights not in punishing but in being good to us. And He never delights in punishing us. The Lord never took any pleasure in the death of sinners, and He never takes any pleasure in the chastisement of his children. Never. And the Lord never takes any pleasure in humiliating us.

Now, there is a school of thought, it isn't really organized, you just hear it here and there, it flutters about like a sour butterfly, but it lights here and there, and you will find it getting into the language of the preachers, that God loves to humiliate His people. Stories are told of how God brings somebody down until he whimpers and trembles and blubbers, and then the Lord forgives him, and all is well.

Well, the Lord humbles us, but he never humiliates us. The devil and the world and sin will humiliate, but God made us in His image, and God is not going to humiliate His image. He's going to humble sin, but He's not going to humiliate us. The Lord never wants us to get to a place where we lose self-respect, and that's of course what humiliation is.

Now, God delights in our profit forever. He delights in our holiness, in our health, in our happiness, in our fruitfulness, in our profit and in our reward. God delights in this. If you could only go out with this one thought in your mind tonight, God delights in my prosperity, it could change the whole weather, all the climate of your life for all time to come, if you could go out with that idea in your mind. And because God delights not in punishing, but He delights in our health and happiness and fruitfulness and reward, He leads us in the way that we should go.

Now, I want to show you that there are three dimensions here, and these dimensions are, he leads us in a way that will honor God, profit us, and bless others. Now, those are the three dimensions, and you can't get away from them. There is no place else you can go. Of course, you're in a world as big as the universe, but it's a three-cornered world. It is a three-dimensional world at any rate.

In God, everything that you do, God wants it to have three reasons and three motives, back of it, or at least three to eventuate in three results. To honor Him, profit you, and

bless everybody else. That's the will of God. Now, how does God do this? And this is what we're concerned with tonight.

Now, if you want to, you can start taking notes right here. I will say one thing tonight, everything else I'll say, probably you have heard before. But I will say one thing tonight, and I'll point it out when I come to it, that if you believe, if you dare to believe, and if you will go home believing, and if you will write it in your heart and across your mind, and in your thinking, and in your praying, if you'll have this one thing, it will give you guidance for all the rest of the days. I'll point it out when I come to it. But leading up to it, let me point out to you that to get a leading from God, first of all, the lead of God requires that we be his children indeed.

Now, there's a sharp line drawn in the Bible between the children of Adam and the children of God. Religion, just religion, Christian religion as we know it, what we call Christendom. I never liked the word. Christendom doesn't draw that sharp line. We gloss it over for politeness' sake and for tolerance sake. We gloss it over. And if a fellow is decent at all, he doesn't beat his wife and curse his children, why, we're willing to believe that he's in the kingdom or partway in the kingdom. And if he gives a hundred dollars to Hungarian relief, we're willing to believe that he must be a wonderful fellow. And if he appears at church on the average of three or four times a month, why, he's in.

Now, the Bible makes a sharp distinction between the children of Adam and the children of God. It isn't a question of righteousness, it's a question of birth. And to ignore it for any reason, tolerance or politeness, is to violate the Scriptures and to go contrary to the teaching of Christ and of the apostles and the historic church.

Only the children of God can profit by what I'm saying to you now. And only the children of God can take the text, I am Jehovah, which teacheth thee to profit and leadeth thee in the way that thou shouldest go.

Now, another thing is, we must be dedicated to the glory of God. There is an evil emphasis today, and it's getting stronger and stronger all the time. It is to use God and bargain with God and go into partnership with God, and even give your money in order that you might invest it in God and God get a return back on it, like going to the First National Bank. You give your tithe, or you double your tithe, and then you tell the story with shining face, I doubled my tithe last year, and so I doubled my profit. It's wonderful how God blesses me.

Now, that is the Christianity of the day. It's not the Christianity of those men and women who hid in caves in the rocks, and who took the spoiling of their goods joyfully. It's not the Christianity of Him who had nowhere to lay his head. It's not the Christianity of the apostles who gave up everything and followed Christ. It is not the religion of the fathers who were slain, who were sawn asunder, who were thrown over cliffs, or who were sewed up in sacks and drowned in the sea, who were thrown into the arena and chewed up by lions, and who lost all.

It was not their Christianity, but it's ours. It's today. It's to use God. Get what you can out of Him. You'll find question-and-answer columns and a little column on the editorial page of the newspaper with some reverend writing and telling you how you can use

God, and it's on the air sometimes, how we can get a profit out of God, and how we can bargain with him, like old Jacob. Oh God, if you'll bless me, I'll give you a ten. God had to change Jacob's name. He was ashamed of it. He changed it to Israel and got rid of that business.

And then we accept earthly success as a proof of heavenly favor. Now, that isn't positively any proof at all. You can go bankrupt and still have the smile of God on your heart. You can make millions and have the frown of God on you because of your sin. Now, God will never lead anybody for his own glory.

Now, I think I ought not to lean over backwards the other direction. I don't mean that if you're having a profitable year that therefore you're backsliding. No, we do not equate backsliding or profit with backsliding. We only say that whether it's the will of God that for a given year you should make money or lose, it is always the will of God that you should profit for now and for eternity. But it's not financial profit.

You never can tell how well off a Christian is by looking at his bank book. Never. You never can tell the spiritual status of a Christian by looking at the size, model, and year of his automobile. Never, never, because there's no relation there. God prospered Israel in earthly things, but he profits His church in spiritual things. But God will never lead us except for His own glory. And He will never lead anybody for his own glory.

And then, we must be fully surrendered to Christ. So, when I say a little later, how can we get the will of God, remember that if you're not fully surrendered to Christ, you cannot be sure you have the will of God. Because it requires that we do be dedicated to the glory of God and surrendered to Christ Himself.

Now, let me warn you, don't imagine that if you're dedicated to a church, everything will be all right. There are people who have lived a lifetime in a church. They're part and parcel, they're part of the furniture in a church. They're old deacons who have watched a generation come and go down. And we say, oh, he's dedicated to the church, he's surrendered to the church. Never, never, never. To be surrendered to a denomination or even a local church like this, no, never.

Then there are others who are all whipped up over a doctrine. They have just discovered that immersion is the right mode, or a pouring is the right mode. Or, they have just discovered that there will be a seven-year period between the first and second coming, or that there isn't going to be two comings. So they get all whipped up over a doctrine. You can go vastly astray if your consecration is to a doctrine, however right the doctrine might be. The Lord never says, surrender yourself to the doctrine. He says, surrender yourself to Me.

And then there are those who are all surrendered to a project. Somebody decides that God has called him to paint a Scripture text on rocks along the highway. And he gets himself a paintbrush and an old Ford, and sweats and labors and works hard and lives on hamburgers in order to get that done. He's got a project on. Somebody else's project is something else. Christians are all divided up into projects. They used to say we're divided into sects, but now we're divided into projects. And it's this project and that project.

Come up some, oh, say Wednesday to my office and I'll show you some mail. They want you; I don't know where they think we got the money, but everybody has a project and he's dedicated to that project. He lives and dies by it. Never make the mistake of dedicating yourself to a project, neither foreign missions or evangelism or Jewish work or anything else. Do those things and serve in those things. They're all in the will of God. But surrender yourself to Jesus Christ and not to a project and not to a plan, but to Jesus Himself.

And always remember that a shepherd can't lead a self-willed sheep. If you're not surrendered, you can't be led. I am the Lord that teacheth thee to profit and leadeth thee. But of course, He assumes that they can be led. God cannot lead a self-willed Christian.

And then we must give the right place to the Holy Scriptures and to the Holy Spirit. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God. And so, the Spirit is sent to lead us, and we must give complete surrender to Him. And we must have Him. The Christian who denies the Spirit, quenches the Spirit, grieves the Spirit, rejects the Spirit, doesn't need to expect to be led. He'll have to go by the book, the Constitution. He'll have to take down what they call naively the minutes. And he'll have to go according to the black Book.

Sometimes when we're no longer able to get the leadings of the Lord, we organize, get a constitution, bylaws, and regulations. And then after that, we don't need God. We just get along by looking at the book. If a question comes up, we turn to page 298, Article 3, Section 4, line 5. And we know where to go from there, and we don't need God. But remember that I'm talking now to Christians who want to know how to be led. I point out, you've got to give the Holy Spirit His right of way, and you've got to give the Holy Scriptures their right place.

Now there are three possibilities. We make a heavy burden out of being led of the Lord when it's one of the easiest things in all the world. A praying, Bible-loving, Spirit-conscious Christian ought to find the guidance of the Lord very easy. And yet they do not, or at least people do not. Maybe it's because they're not praying Bible-loving, Spirit-conscious Christians. But a lot of people write in to me, and I'm only one, a small one of thousands. Or they come to me, and they say, I want to know the will of God.

Well, it ought to be a very easy thing. If you're a praying Christian, if you're a surrendered Christian dedicated to the glory of God, and you're truly a Christian, and not just a church member or a professor, but you're truly a Christian, then God could lead you very easily.

Now here's one mistake we make. Put this down at least in your memory, that some people refuse to be led in any other way than by a wonder or a miracle. If it isn't wonderful, they don't believe God did it. Now, don't require God to do a miracle to lead you. He said that He would guide His children, but He didn't say that He would guide His children in a miraculous manner or even a supernatural manner. He just said He would lead us in the way that we should go. So don't require God to do some wonderful thing.

A silly sample of this is the man who said, I said to God, this happened down in the state of West Virginia, where such things often happen. The young man said, I was walking down the railroad track, and I was wondering if I was called to preach or not. And I said, oh God, if I'm called to preach, have that bird over there light on my shoulder. And he said, the bird lit on my shoulder.

Now that's making God do it the hard way. And that is insisting that the Lord do something that I'd be rather embarrassed about it, because I don't think that God is going to use a bird to help call me. He might use a rooster to bring an apostle to repentance and a jackass in order to rebuke the madness of a prophet. And I suppose the Lord could use a bird to call a preacher. But knowing that preacher, I think the bird called the preacher instead of the Lord.

Now my brethren, about some things, there just isn't any use to ask guidance. Hear me now, about some things, there's just no use to ask guidance. Don't think you're pious every time you go to your knees and pray. Don't think that. There are sometimes when prayer can be a sin, or when at least can be unnecessary, superfluous, and out of order.

So about some things, there's just no use to go and ask God's will because God has already said an emphatic, no. And about the things that are here in the Bible to which God has said an emphatic, no, you just waste your time going to God and asking God to guide me.

Now suppose that I ran a store, and a man backed a truck up and offered me at a very great reduction a fine shipment of something that I sold, say cornflakes. Well, if I knew that those cornflakes had been hijacked out on the highway, there wouldn't be any use for me to say just a moment, I'll go in the back room and then drop on my knees and say, now Father, should I or should I not? Why, you'd insult God by going to Him and asking Him to guide you about whether you accept stolen goods. That's an emphatic, no. The Christian is to be honest if he starves to death. The Christian is to be clean and right and true and honest. And so, there isn't any use to go to God to ask Him whether you ought to buy stolen property.

And there isn't any use for you to go to God and ask whether you ought to bet on a horse. There isn't any use to go to God and ask if you ought to run off with another man's wife. There isn't any use to go to God and ask whether you should do the wrong thing. God has declared, no, with a loud voice.

Well, then there are some things about which God has said just as emphatic a, yes. And there isn't any reason to go to God about that except to thank Him sometimes. Read your Bible. Here you will hold in your hand the Book. And I think we grieve God because we read Life magazine more than we do the Bible, a lot of Christians do. And they read the box score and the standings of the clubs, and they know them, but they don't know what's contained in the Book of Romans. Then when they get in a pinch, they say, O God guide me.

Well, we haven't gone to the Book to find out what God has said, and therefore we don't get guidance because we're not familiar with the Scripture. Everything else and all else

being equal, the most perfectly guided man is the man who knows his Bible the best. But in the Scriptures, there are some things about which God has said an emphatic yes.

And it isn't a pious nor spiritual thing to go to the Lord and ask Him, Now, Father, should I do this? Please guide me. And call up that Brother Tozer and say, you pray for me that I'll have guidance on whether I ought to give a tithe or not. You don't ask God about that. To do so is to insult God. Of course, the Bible declares a man ought to give. And somebody says, Will you please pray that I might be guided?

There's a widow down the block and she's been sick in bed, and she's run out of groceries and her check won't last through. And should I take her basket? Don't bother God about that, mister. Don't go to God at all and don't call up the parsonage because you know you ought to do that. The Scripture says, do good unto all men, give and it shall be given to you, shaken down and running over.

He has scattered abroad yet given to the poor and His righteousness remaineth forever. And the whole sweep of the Bible teaches us that we ought to do those good things. So, we only waste our time and confuse our mind and practice a kind of mental hypocrisy when we go to God and ask Him whether we ought to tithe and whether we ought to serve and whether we ought to help people and whether we ought to be baptized.

Somebody says, will you please pray that I might have guidance? No, I won't pray that you will have guidance. I will pray that you'll get some faith and good sense, but I won't pray that you'll have any guidance because the Bible is very plain. It says, teaching them, making converts of all the nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost and teaching them. That's plain.

And then you, somebody has had a row with you and there is no forgiveness and you're in trouble. And you say now, God, please teach, show me whether I ought or ought not to forgive that man. Why, of course, you ought to forgive that man. Doesn't the Scripture say, forgiving even as God has in Christ, for Christ's sake, forgiven you. There's no use to pray to God about that.

And there's no use to pray to God whether you ought to pray or not. Somebody says, please pray that I'll be guided about my prayer life. There's only one way to pray, mister and dear sister. Only one way to pray and that's to pray.

I often think of dear old Dr. Adam Clark, that godly, saintly old man of God who wrote the commentary. He got up at four o'clock in the morning to work and pray, that is, pray and work at his writing and preaching. And some young man went up to him and said, Dr. Clark, I understand you get up very early in the morning. How do you do it? Do you have some rule by which you get up? No, I just get up. And that's the only way to get up, just get up. Don't make a production out of it, just get up.

And so it is with praying. You pray for me that I'll have guidance about my prayer life? No, I'll pray that you'll be obedient, and I'll pray that the Lord will enlighten you, but I won't pray that you pray because you've been told to pray. Pray without ceasing. We have the example of everybody from Abel down. And we have the commands of the

Scriptures and the examples of the saints and therefore nobody needs to pray whether he ought to pray or not.

And then some say, would you pray for me that I might know whether I ought to witness or not? Doesn't the Bible say, ye are my witnesses? Doesn't it say ye shall be filled with His Spirit and shall be witnesses unto me? Of course you ought to witness.

So there are some things that you just don't pray to God about. Some things God has said, no, these are not for my children. Other things and then many more he has said, yes, these are for my children.

And then there is a third set of things and here's where everybody gets in trouble. Now this is the point that you've probably never heard said before, a thing you've never heard said before, and that is this, that for the blood-washed, obedient, surrendered child of God, there are a hundred things that come into his life that God doesn't care which he does, that he can be perfectly free and relaxed and not worry himself nor do more than simply send up a little thanks to God that he's free. But you don't have to go to God for everything.

Now, my brethren, I say that most of our lives, almost everything that touches not all, but so many things that touch our lives are like that. The Lord lays the principle down and He says, now I've given you intelligence and common sense. I've given you experience and history back there. You've got your Bible and now you're free. You don't have to consult me on every detail.

Now I am your Lord and I'll be ready when you're in a jam and I'll always be with you and communing with you. But as for the details of your life, you don't have to worry about them. The shepherd leads the sheep. And Jesus said that he would lead His people as a shepherd leads his sheep. But you know how we sheep try to make it out. We want the Lord to show us which tuft of grass to nibble on at a given time.

Now, let us suppose that this is a shepherd. We won't smile about it when we think about our heavenly shepherd, but earthly shepherds for a minute. Here is an obedient sheep. And he said to the rest of the sheep of the flock that morning, now I am an obedient little sheep, and my shepherd has promised to lead me. And I've been praying that he would lead me.

And so, all day long, I'm going to have my shepherd lead me. And so, all day long, he's in a state of frustration and borderline nervous breakdown. He's always saying, oh shepherd, should I nibble on this one? And the shepherds say, yeah, nibble on that. And so, he nibbles that one down. And then he says, now, could I go over here and nibble here? And so, the shepherd says, yeah, you can nibble over there. And pretty soon you've driven the shepherd crazy and the sheep crazy.

My brother, the Shepherd says He leads His flock, but He leaves the individual tuft of grass to the intelligence of the lowly sheep. And He's out ahead of them, leading them, keeping the way clear, driving off the lions and the bears and seeing to it that they're led by the still water. But He's not going to tell each sheep how many gulps of water to take. And He's not going to tell each sheep how many times to chew each bunch of grass. He

leaves that to the will of the sheep. What kind of mechanical men would we be if we expected the Lord to go into all the details of our life?

Now, here's the part you think is unspiritual, but it is just the thing that's going to free you from a whole world of worry if you listen to me. There are some things to which God has said, no. There are some things which God has said, yes.

And then there's a whole world of common living to which God hasn't said anything. He just has given you common sense and intelligence and says, now, honor Me, love Me, put yourself in My hands, and I don't care which you do.

Now, let's illustrate a little bit. One of my faults as a preacher is that I don't tell enough stories, I guess. I've got to buy me a book, One Thousand Stories for Preaching. All right, get me that for Christmas, and I'll use it to hold the window up.

But God gives a man a watch, and God says, all right, now this is a watch. I'm giving it to you. And it's an excellent watch, and it'll keep time perfect, with perfect precision, for the rest of your life.

Now, do you think we honor God then by going to God every five minutes and inquiring the time of day? Why, I think not. God says, I've given you a watch, son, can't you read? There's the time of day. If you want to praise me and you want to pray, pray continually. If you want to intercede for others, all right, I'm ready to hear your prayer. But don't bother me about the time of day, because I've given you a watch. And all you have to do is consult the watch, and it's a precise watch. It's mine, I gave it to you. And by trusting your watch, you honor me and my gift.

Or a sailor out on the sea with his compass, or with his wheel. He's a pious sailor. He's been to a Bible Institute, and he carries a big Bible weighing 12 pounds. And he's a real Christian. And he wants to be led of the Lord. And he's read booklets on how to be led of the Lord. So, he kneels down by the wheel and says, Lord, should I turn it to the left or to the right? And the Lord said, just a minute, son, what's that right ahead of you there? That's a compass. Well, I gave you the compass, and it always works. Go according to the compass and relax.

And that's exactly where we Christians make our mistakes. We want God to pick out everything for us, and we're not satisfied unless He does. We read some biography of some Christian, some praying Christian who had a wonderful experience, and we want one just like it.

Bud Robison was a great preacher in his day, and he was a happy old child of God. He wasn't always old, but he got old. And sometime during his life when he was just learning, he heard a remarkable testimony about a man who had gone to sea, and the ship was sinking, and he prayed, and the Lord delivered him, and a miracle took place. It was wonderful.

And Bud, his lips stuck out, and he pouted and went home and got down on his knees and said, God, I never had an experience like that. You never saved me from a watery grave. After he had prayed himself out and whimpered a while, a still, small voice said,

Bud, have you ever been to sea? And he said, no, I've never been to sea. Well, then said the still, small voice, how could I save you from shipwreck when you've never been off the land? Bud smiled and got to his feet and said, thank you, Lord, I get it. I see it.

Now, it always seems to be very spiritual to go to the Lord about every little detail, whereas actually, God doesn't care. Now, shall we illustrate some more? Suppose you're going to buy a car, and you're in the Plymouth, Ford, and Chevrolet bracket. You know that by just how much you make and how much it costs to live, and you say to your wife, well, we'll get a new car, but it's got to be one of the lower priced cars. She agrees. It's all right. You'll get the family around, nice cars.

So, you start downtown. O Lord, lead me as to which one I should choose. Lead me, Lord. The Lord says, son, don't do that. I don't care. They're all good. Go ahead and buy one. I'll bless you. I can take care of a Ford as well as a Plymouth, and if you should by any chance like a Chevrolet, buy that. I don't care.

You see, brethren, the will of God is that we should put ourselves in His hand, expect Him to lead us, and then relax and act naturally. But to expect the Lord to go downtown with you and choose the model and the color and the year, well, that's silly. But you say that sounds unspiritual. I always pray the Lord will show me which street to take to work. Why don't you pray for the Chinese or the Koreans or the Hungarians or somebody while you're wasting God's time and yours, praying for the Lord. Don't you know the way to work? God's given you a watch and God's given you a compass. Use them. But you say the Scripture says, lean not unto thine own understanding. Sure, the Scripture says that.

The carnal man who has his own understanding and rejects God and rules God out, why, he'll not get anywhere because God will turn his back on him. But the man who has given God his understanding and it's been redeemed and renewed and sanctified and Spirit-filled, that man needn't worry. That's not his own understanding, that's the understanding God has given him.

Somebody goes into a restaurant, and they bring him what is a bill of fare. And here it is, lamb chops, white fish, hamburger under a very florid and beautiful name. I've discovered about 12 different names for hamburger. And there they are down the line, small steak, whatever, all down the line.

Now, are we going to have a prayer meeting and ask God which to choose? No, God says, you honor me by relaxing and choosing whichever you like. Whatever you like, take it. It's all right with me. Eat what's set before you and ask no questions, for conscience's sake.

Oh, my friends, the leading of the Lord is a beautiful thing if we didn't make such a tough job out of it. If you shouldn't do it, it's written in the Book. If you should do it, it's written in the Book. And then all in between, there's a whole world of perfectly natural and good and right and common things that you and I can do or not do. We can have or not have; we can do it this way or do it that way. But you and I like to put up an either or and say it's got to be this or this. And God says, no, son, it can be this or this or 12 other things. And you're right no matter what you do.

Somebody will come and say, Mr. Tozer, will you pray whether I ought to go to Moody, Northern Baptist, Bethel College, Taylor, Nyack, or Asbury? Well, I'll pray for you, but I don't think that you'll go wrong no matter where you go if you're in the will of God. That is, if you put yourself in God's hands and will then let God's providence and circumstances and your own personal feelings about the matter decide where you're to go.

Now, it could be an instance where somebody is so totally ignorant, he never heard of Moody's. Could be that somebody in the world somewhere is so benighted that he never heard of Nyack. The oldest of such schools in the world, any of you students from Moody's, I'd be glad to tell you that. But it could be.

So, the Lord may have to do an unusual thing, but He only does an unusual thing when you're haven't faith enough to let Him do the usual thing.

So, brother and sister, God doesn't care whether you take lamb chops or a hamburger with a Latin name, just so you thank Him. The old here old brother Compton used to say, return thanks over a soup bone and it'll go a long way.

So, thank God that's all. He doesn't care which street you drive down. Now, there could be a situation once in a lifetime where you didn't know and where you were in real danger. Then the Lord by his providence would prevent you from getting into that trouble. But that's once in a lifetime. It's not the way to live. To insist on living on that tension all the time, it makes people neurotic and then they think they're spiritual. When they get neurotic and all blub-blub-blubby, then they say, that's near to God. No, you're not near to God. You're a big baby and God has to lead you around.

Now, to lead a little fella around, I wouldn't mind. I wouldn't mind leading that little girl with all that hair that we dedicated this morning. I guess she can't walk yet, but as soon as she gets through, she can. I'd like to lead her. But when she's 14 years old, she won't want me to lead her. She'll be able to get around on her own steam long before that.

And so, if I insist upon being a carnal baby and always worry about whether I'm in the will of God or not, I suppose the only thing God can do will be to take me by the hand and toddle me along. But he doesn't want me to be like that. He says, you're still children. You're children yet. Grow up into a mature man in Christ Jesus.

Now, just a minute or two more, the unusual situation. You say, ah, that's me, Mr. Tozer. I have an unusual situation. And I can't get information about it. I don't have information. My watch won't work on that one. My compass is out of order on that one. I just haven't the information.

Well, let me give you some Scripture. If, let me read it to you right out of the King James Version, then you'll know it's inspired. Now, listen to this. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

Notice how he's liberal and not upbraiding. And we think he's stingy and churlish. He gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavers like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed, let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. Let him ask in faith for wisdom, and then let him do whatever he thinks and believes after quiet thought is the right thing to do.

And don't be afraid to make a decision. If you make the wrong decision, the Lord will providentially guide you into the right one. If you're surrendered, if you've given up to Him, if you're happy in Him and will do anything He says, you can't go wrong. And anything you'll do will be right.

The young lady says, should I be a nurse? Should I be a secretary? Should I do none of those things? Should I try to be a physical instructor, a culture instructor in the college? Just what should I do? Well, I'll pray for you, but I don't think you can go wrong if you're in the will of God. Put yourself in God's hand and then trust His providential dealings. That will be your wisdom.

But you want a big miracle, do you? You want a production. You want the Lord to come down and light the candles and put up the colored balloons and give a fanfare and say, look, this is my child. Isn't he wonderful? You know what would happen to you? You'd backslide in 24 hours.

The Lord is not going to do it that way. The Lord is going quietly to lead you. And he often leads you without your knowing He's leading you in order that you won't be proud of the fact you're being led.

Listen to this. And I will bring the blind by way that they knew not. You can't write any book on that, you know.

If you're crossing a bridge and it breaks and in a wonderful way you're saved from destruction, you can write a tract on that. But I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not and lead them in paths that they have not known. That's too humbling. Nothing to do there but just look up and smile and thank God in a kind of a shamed-faced way and say, Lord, I'm sorry I was so dumb. I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and not forsake them.

That is Isaiah 42:16. I will bring the blind by the way that they knew not. Never read that in a tract, never read that in a book, no counselor ever helped you there. You didn't know which way to go, and you were totally blind for the moment on that one.

So you went to the Lord and said, O Father, lead me. And God said, all right, I'll lead you. And go ahead, just walk, just walk and trust me. And so, you walk and trust Him. And after a while your sight comes back, and you look down the road and bless my heart you've never been an inch out of the way all the way down. And you didn't know where you were, but you're trusting God. Abraham went out not knowing where he was going, but as their brother said, he knew who was going with him. And that's all you need to know.

Well, the trusting child of God will never go astray no matter what he does, provided of course it's right. I'm talking about a series of choices. Mostly we make it one thing and a possible alternative, but God says maybe a dozen things.

I wonder why God raised up so many good schools, so that people could go to anyone they happened to be near to or knew somebody there or found a catalog or their mother-in-law graduated there or their father. Or, in some way or other a web of providence led them to that school. And then they say, oh, I'm sure God led me here. Sure, God led you there. But by another set of circumstances, you might've been a Nyack or Taylor. It doesn't make any difference, son.

You're driving a nice new 57 Chevrolet with a back wing swept wheels or whatever they are. All right. Very nice. Very nice. Somebody happened to get to you, or you happened to pass by a window when they had the lights on. So, you bought that one. You might just as well have been driving a Ford. And the Lord wouldn't have cared if you'd been driving a Plymouth.

The New York Board, I'm going there tomorrow, you know, the leaders of the flock, bless them, everyone, me included. And one day they, they said, we're going to buy, we've got to buy a station wagon to transport Christian missionaries around up at Nyack. And, uh, we want either a Ford, Plymouth or Chevrolet. And things were kind of dull. So, I got up and said, Mr. Chairman, who's to decide whether we take a Ford, Chevrolet or Plymouth? Well, while they were waiting around, why I said, Mr. Chairman, I think I have a quotation from Longfellow that'll help you to decide. Well, they waited. I said, Longfellow wrote, did he lay there in the forest by the Ford across the river? And, uh, I said, I think that's it.

Well, if you didn't have a sense of humor, sometimes you'd die of frustration. But, uh, all those dignitaries let down their hair, what there was of it, mostly, mostly to get on that board, you don't have any hair, but they let it down, laughed, and I left the room for a little breather.

Now, my friends, seriously, for this is a serious talk, while you are yielded and confident, you can't go wrong. And whether you have a sharp, clear leading or not, you can't go wrong if you seek God's will. It is only when you resist God's will that you go wrong. You can't go right while you're resisting God's will, and you can't go wrong while you're yielded to it.

So, no matter what city you live in, where you buy a house, what car you drive, what job, what school, who you marry, put yourself in God's hand, and then relax and act naturally. And you'll have lots of time then to be thankful.

Instead of begging, begging, you'll have lots of time to be thankful. And all the time, the Lord will be leading you and guiding you to His glory and for your profit and for the blessing of mankind, and you'll not go astray, and you'll not make a mistake.

And if you should blunder and make a mistake, while your kind Heavenly Father knows you meant well, He'll correct it for you. We have a word for that, and it's "overrule." You

used to hear the dear old Saints, O Lord, overrule any mistake. That's good praying, brother. God will overrule things if you make a mistake accidentally. If you set your teeth and make a mistake, you've got judgment coming. But if you're surrendered to the will of God and you make a mistake, God will overrule it, and there won't be any final lasting mistake at all.

So now the text again. I wonder if we could turn to it and read it, and that'll be all for tonight. Isaiah 48:17. Everybody, thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldst go. Do you believe that? Amen.