

Divine Guidance

*Following is an edited sermon preached by one Clyde Powell, Oct. 3, 1962.
I don't know who he is, but I ran across this again recently. It is one of the best
I have ever read on the subject and wanted to share it with you. Dea*

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts" Col. 3:15. Other translations render this, "let the peace of God be an umpire". In other words, God's peace, when you get saved, comes down deep within your heart. He gives us His peace. In John, chapter 17, in Jesus' great High Priestly prayer, He was praying to the Father and said, "Father, my peace I give unto them". Then again, in talking to his disciples, he said in the 14th chapter of John, "My peace I leave with you."

The peace that Jesus had, he left with his disciples. And, of course, when we are saved and receive Christ as our personal Savior, this peace of God comes into our souls. Now the enemy would endeavor to uproot you, to disturb you, to demoralize you, to blind you, to cause you to ignore that, and to bring unrest within your bosom. Anything that disturbs your inner peace is not of God. That's what the scripture is saying, *"let the peace of God act as an umpire"* in the decisions in your life. Whatever you do with your life, the decisions that you make as you go about your day, if you feel upset within your spirit, then is the time to pause and pray and look to God. Thank God for God's guidance.

The Lord said in His word, *"I will guide thee with mine eye"* (Ps. 32:8). He says, *"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"* (Prov. 3:5). May we always be sure of this divine guidance? I want to give you some simple rules that I trust will be helpful in ascertaining divine guidance for your life.

First of all, it is most necessary to be absolutely sincere. Sincerely want God's will in your life. *Secondly*, let one and only one thought actuate or motivate you and that is the glory of God, that the lord might be pleased in your life. *Thirdly*, be willing, if it be the Lord's will, to have your request denied. Be as willing for it to be denied as you are willing for it to be granted. A little poem says, "While peace we seek, or place we shun, the soul fords happiness in none. But with God to guide my way, tis equal joy to go or stay." The greatest and only true joy is in the perfect will of God. *Fourth*, do not become agitated. If you have honestly missed God's first plan, He is considerate and glad to give you another opportunity. Thank God for God's grace.

There are times we miss God's perfect and God's best within our lives, but God doesn't scratch you off His list just because you make a mistake and just because you miss it. If you have failed God, drop on your knees and ask God to forgive you and restore you. Say, "Lord, I missed it". I failed to understand. Now, Lord won't you speak again to my heart?

Remember, God and His providences lead in only one direction at a time. Never adopt a new course until you feel equally clear to abandon a former one. This has acted as a guide line for years in my own heart and ministry in ascertaining the will of God. Always recognize that you and your plans are His property – that you belong to God and that the Lord has an investment within your life. And, if you are His property, you can afford to be set aside and unused if He can afford it, since your eye

is single (that is, truly looking to do His will. Editor). The longer the delay, the larger the pay. Be willing to submit your plans to your superiors. If your leadings are wholly of the Lord, they will survive all opposition.

The more you are abused, the more you will be used. Our life and our testimony should be always open to the scrutiny of others. We should be like Jesus who appeared in the upper room to the fearful disciples who had closed the door. He said, "*Handle me and see*". Peter and John said, "*Look on us*" to the lame man at the temple. Our lives should bear investigation and scrutiny by others. The more we're abused, the more we'll be used, if we have a sincere desire to serve God and to have His will and His guidance. (I think, by this he means your willingness to be judged for your mistakes and weaknesses, or have your motives misunderstood by others, though you try to stay humble & teachable. Editor.)

Then, let's learn to rest in God. If we are wholly His, everything that comes to us is either sent for or permitted by the Lord. If it is sent, then it is the very best thing that could come. If it is permitted, He stands ready, if we only believe, to rule and overrule all for our good and for His glory. Then, He blesses us for having faith in His word.

And then we need to learn to wait. When you do not know what to do, simply do nothing. Wait until the fog clears away. Remember the illustration of the man who went into the telephone booth one evening and complained because he could not read the telephone directory. Someone said, "close the door". As he closed the door, the light came on. Many is the time in all our hypertensive meanderings, we miss God because we have not taken time to wait upon Him to ascertain His will. We have not taken time to look to God, to close the door, to seek His face.

When we close the door and wait before God, the light comes on. It is the hardest thing in the world to simply do nothing and wait upon God and look and listen with the ears of our soul until He speaks to our heart. Let's not force a half-open door. Let's have complete victory. Ability to hold still while under pressure gives God unlimited sway in our behalf. A hurry spirit is always from beneath. Let's not forget that. "*He that believeth shall not make haste*" (Isa. 28:16) and "*We which have believed do enter into rest*" (Heb. 4:3).

Above all, let's see to it that all self-interest and self-seeking are gone. Few are wholly free from unsanctified ambition. Some believe they are, but the fact that they are uneasy when opposed is proof of lack of perfect resignation. Being dead to all things but God will enable one to keep calm and make Him responsible as to the outcome. We need to listen to Him, to let the Lord impress our hearts. But, Paul said, "*there are many voices in the world and none of them without signification*". In seeking guidance, watch out for other voices and impressions. "*Let the peace of God rule your hearts*".

Divine impressions are persuasive. God does not drive us, but He leads us as His children. Impressions from other sources are loud, clamorous, feverish, and seek to drown the Spirit's voice within our hearts. You can detect the devil because he talks loud: "*he goeth about as a roaring lion*". He roars through circumstances. Jesus always talks low and tender. Any impression can be made in a loud boisterous, rushing, pell mell sort of way or can come quietly, gently, tenderly and sweetly

from the Spirit of God. Impressions from above always give sufficient time to the honest seeker to test their genuineness, and this is important. *"If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. . . But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle"* (James 3:14-17).

Those impressions from below, from the enemy, are in a hurry and fear detection, thus they clamor for immediate decisions. The devil wants you to be in a hurry and not wait for anything. Whereas, Jesus is always quiet and always calm and always takes His time. When you take things to God in prayer, and you wait, if God makes an impression on the mind, it always comes gently and tenderly from His presence. The more you wait on God and the more you pray, if the conviction comes from Him, the stronger it becomes. If it comes from the devil or the flesh, the more you wait, and the more you pray, the weaker the voice or impression grows.

Impressions from above always welcome the light. Those from below shrink back from the light and the truth and God's Word, are afraid of tests, and don't like to be questioned or challenged. Impressions from above, from the Lord, when they are followed, are attended by a sweet peace and the consciousness that they are right. Those from below are attended by perplexity and a feeling that something is wrong and questioning. The first brings rest. The second robs us of it. Impressions from the Lord ripen into convictions. God never asks us to act on uncertainties. The devil comes with a suggestion and it appears to be the truth. He persistently pushes it. If resisted, he claims that those who do so are resisting the Spirit and failing God. But, if the Holy Spirit inspires anything, He always gives time to consult about it with God. He encourages us to get a witness to any guidance (II Cor. 13:1).

Here is how to test impressions within your heart. *First*, is it scriptural? Is it in harmony with the revealed Word of God? *Secondly*, is it right? Is it in harmony with God's will as revealed in man's moral nature? *Thirdly*, is it providential? Is it in harmony with God's will as revealed in God's providential dealings? (I assume, by this, he means God's character, as revealed in his past dealings and decisions with man as chronicled in the scriptures. Is this the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23)? Is this idea compatible with the way God dealt with David, Moses, or Paul? Is this how God has led others in the past? Would this violate any of the cardinal truths revealed about God and His ways. Editor). *Fourthly*, is it reasonable? Is it in harmony with God's will as revealed to a spiritually enlightened judgment? (Thus the need for receiving counsel from spiritual leaders before making decisions as Proverbs teaches: 11:14, 12:15, 20:1, 24:6. Editor).

(Added to the above could be the need to have a "teachable spirit". If you are proud and self-confident, you are not likely to be interested in what others think about your decisions. We call such a person "*a self-made man*". As Jack Hayford says, "*he is usually an example of poor craftsmanship*" and worships his maker (himself!). A teachable person understands that he needs the input of many to become all God wants him to be. He needs the five fold gifts in Eph. 4:11. He needs his helpmate's input. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he that hearkens to counsel is wise." Prov. 12:15. Editor.)