

## The Yellow Brick Road

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2 Samuel 10:1-7

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Not long ago I was watching *The Wizard of Oz*. There's a particular scene that has always bothered me (and no it's not when Dorothy asks, "What would you do with a brain if you had one?"). As Dorothy is looking for a way back to Kansas, the Munchkins tell her to "Follow the Yellow Brick Road". But if you look closely there are actually two roads that lead out of Munchkin land. There is the yellow one of course, but also the less obvious red road. Well, Dorothy wouldn't have known which to choose. She could have stood there all day wondering what to do, and where to go. Thankfully the Munchkins advise Dorothy to take the yellow road, and off she goes, knowing her goal and how to get there. Oh that real life would be that simple. Where is the Lollypop Guild when you need them?

Have you ever felt like this? Have you faced a difficult choice with no clear direction? Have you ever found it difficult to hear God's advice? If you're like most Christians, you probably would like to know where God is leading you, and are probably wondering what He wants you to do. But knowing what He wants and hearing His direction is often times so very difficult. What's a person to do? Well, something happens in King David's life that I believe can be a valuable lesson for those of us who want God to give us direction and guidance; lessons that may help us as we look for God's wisdom and advice. **(Read 2 Samuel 10:1-7)**

I believe we can rightly assume that David meant what he said. I believe he honestly wanted to show brotherly love to Hanun. But this is a situation that got way out of hand because David was unable or unwilling to listen to the wisdom of God.

Hanun was quite inexperienced in the role of king, and it shows. He listened only to the advice of his commanders and no one else. However, David had been a king for a while now, and it seems he should have known better than to make a decision based upon feelings and emotions. And it seems that something is missing in the life of David, something that had guided him in the past. Something has handicapped David's ability to discern the will of God and make wise choices.

First, I find it unusual that David did not consult God. In the past, when faced with a crisis situation he would turn to God for wisdom and guidance, but this time

he did not. The Bible does not mention that he visited with a priest or even prayed. Secondly, verse 7 says that when he learned that Hanun had amassed a huge army, he sent Joab and his warriors to fight. Did all these people really need to die just because some ambassadors were mistreated and humiliated? Well sure it was offensive and insulting, but my point is that it seems David reacted emotionally here. And thirdly, I find it odd that he was not involved with this battle. He sent Joab and his men out to fight while he stayed at home. Again, this is not like David. He seems distracted by something. Something of this world had taken his attention away from God.

I think most of us struggle with knowing what God would have us do. I think most Christians wish that God would send us an email with a complete list of instructions to follow. I think we all wish God would say, "Here's what I want you to do with your life and this is how I want you to do it". But it just never seems to happen. No, it seems God is silent most times. But truthfully He is not. It's just that like King David there are distractions that keep us from hearing from Him, and we never use the tools He has given us to help make those tough, difficult decisions in life.

Sometimes there are just too many people giving us advice, and we are given so many options, that we may forget to ask God what He thinks. God has promised that we do not have to walk through life on our own. He has promised to give us the Holy Spirit that will guide and direct us. He has said that our **"own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left.**"<sup>1</sup> (Isaiah 30:21) Think out it! God has given us the gift of His Spirit to guide us. Jesus promised that, **"The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth. The Spirit doesn't speak on his own. He will tell you only what he has heard from me, and he will let you know what is going to happen."**<sup>2</sup> (John 16:13) But that cannot happen until we draw near to God and listen quietly for God.

We also have been given His word. I know it sounds quite simple, but a lot of times, the answer we are seeking can be found in the Bible. But remember, God

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup>*The Contemporary English Version : With Apocrypha*. 1997, c1995 (electronic ed.) (Jn 16:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

does not contradict Himself. If the Bible speaks about an issue, it's pretty plain to me that I should not make a decision that goes against His word. Adultery is wrong, that's pretty plain. Why would a person even ask God if it is His will for them to cheat on their wife? Lying is wrong. Why would anyone ask if God wants them to stretch the truth? Sex outside of marriage is wrong. So don't go around saying that this baby was part of God's will. Oh, God loves the baby, that's for sure. But it is not His will that you do things contrary to His teachings. Paul reminds us that, **"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."**<sup>3</sup> (2 Timothy 3:16). If you want direction and guidance on how to handle a situation or wisdom on how to make a choice, search the Bible. Read His word, and let it guide your life.

Sometimes we can't discern God's will because of the distractions of earthly things. Sometimes we actually have the nerve to tell God what we think He should be doing. Well, James puts it quite bluntly. **(Read James 4:1-4)**

Rather than take the time and make the effort to hear from Him, most of us will live out our life the easy way; making choices based upon our emotions, and based upon what makes us happy. We decide things according to our own selfish ambitions. But as true followers of Christ, we must take the time to ask God about His will. We must let His word and Spirit be our guide. And we must humble ourselves, surrendering our lives to His will.

You know, when we have these questions about what God wants from us, or what He wants us to do, you can be sure that He is speaking. The real questions we should be asking is whether or not we are listening!

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<sup>3</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*.