

# Divine Direction

by Denis Lyle

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*God guides us through various means, including His Word, Spirit, providence, and other believers, and we must seek to understand and obey His will with faith and trust.*

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 8:1, Psalm 32:8, Psalm 146:9, Isaiah 58:11, Matthew 19:29, John 10:4, John 21:18, Romans 12:2, Romans 16:6, Hebrews 11:8

**Topics:** "Gods Guidance", "Christian Obedience"

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## Description

Denis Lyle preaches on Divine Direction, using examples from the Bible to illustrate how individuals sought and followed God's guidance in their lives. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's will in decision-making, highlighting the need for personal, particular, and partial guidance from God. It explores the themes of Guidance, Obedience, and Providence, showcasing how individuals like the woman from Shunem obeyed God's directives despite uncertainties, costs, and objections, ultimately experiencing God's providential care and restoration.

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## Transcript

Reading: 2 Kings 8:1-6 DIVINE DIRECTION A lady received a brochure outlining a tour to Israel. She had the time, money and strength to take the trip but wondered if it were God's will. Rereading the pamphlet just before going to sleep, she noted that the airplane for the trip was a 747 jet. She tossed all night, restlessly arguing the pros and cons of fulfilling a lifelong ambition to visit the Holy Land. Awaking in the morning, she looked at her digital clock. It said 7:47.

She exclaimed, "It must be the Lord's will for me to take that tour". A pastor, who had served as a deacon in his preordination days, toyed with the idea of buying an honorary doctor of divinity from a diploma mill. Reading, (1 Tim 3:13) he was confident he had his answer, "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree." George Muller, as a missionary volunteer in his early Christian experience, tried to ascertain the field to which he should go by buying a ticket on the royal lottery.

What a contrast to his later experience of praying in thousands of pounds to care for orphans. A young Bible College student who had just finished his studies was seeking God for direction in relation to which country he should serve the Lord. Driving his car one day in Washington DC it broke down outside the Philippine's embassy. He felt he had been given Divine Direction. But then it is possible to enjoy Divine Direction in life In its broad highways and in its byways Can we know beyond doubt that we're moving in

the orbit of God's will Does God guide today How often do we find ourselves having to make decisions that vitally affect ourselves, our families, our future interests and relationships.

How absolutely necessary therefore that we be guided by a Wisdom higher than our own. Now this story in (8:1-6) throws some light on the problem of guidance. Do you recall this woman who lived in the little town of Shunem in the Valley of Esdraelon Do you remember that it was this lady who ministered unto Elisha's physical needs (4:8) Do you recall that as a reward for her goodness and generosity she became the proud mother of a son... Whose birth was announced by Elisha. (4:16) Years later she saw the power of God demonstrated on her behalf in the restoration of this same son to life. (4:18-37) My, to this godly woman "the life, walk, and triumph", of faith were no new subjects.

She had already been vitally in contact with the promise, provision and power of God. And yet in the life of faith, there are always new tests, new demands, new sacrifices, new occasions for manifesting the spirit of obedience to God's perfect will. And in (8:1-6) we have just such a test. It seems that by now her husband his dead, but God did not forget this "great lady". (Ps 146:9) Elisha warns her of the approaching calamity and in obedience to the Divine Direction she leaves her home and takes up temporary residence in Philistia.

After seven years she returns to her native country, and in a most marvellous way she recovers all her possessions and property that she had given up seven years earlier. Now there are three key words that seem to me to unlock the wealth of instruction embodied in this short story. (1) GUIDANCE For we discover here that this woman received Guidance from God through Elisha. (8:1) Now this is very interesting and contains an important lesson for those who are charged with spiritual oversight.

You see Elisha did not consider that he had already discharged all his indebtedness to this woman when he raised her son to life. (4:34) Rather as a fresh emergency had arisen he gave her timely counsel. My, have you lost interest in those to whom God made you a blessing in the past Or do you seek fresh opportunities to further help them in spiritual things (Rom 16:6 2 Tim 1:16) Well, this is what Elisha did for he brought this woman guidance and there are some things here that I want to you to note about the GUIDANCE she received. (a) SHE WAS GUIDED PERSONALLY: " Then spake Elisha unto the woman". (8:1) As there is no reference made to her husband, we may assume that he was no longer living.

Thus, this lady proved that, "The Lord... relieveth the fatherless and widow". (Ps 146:9) Its good to remember that God treats all of us as individuals, not as statistics or numbers. My, the Lord does not deal with us in the mass, but has personal transactions with each of us. He has a personal plan for each of our lives. The Lord says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye". (Ps 32:8) Isaiah says, "The Lord shall guide thee continually." (Is 58:11) Do you recall that day on the beach in Galilee when the Risen Lord had just revealed to Peter His personal plan and purpose for his life He said in effect, "Peter its My will that you die by crucifixion". (Jn 21:18) Peter got a bit nosy and wondered what the Lord's will for John was.

" Lord, and what shall this man do" (Jn 21:21) Putting it bluntly Christ said in effect, "Peter, its none of your business because that's a personal matter between John and myself". "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee". (Jn 21:23) So the Lord guides us personally and individually. But notice: (b) SHE WAS GUIDED PARTICULARLY: Here is definite and specific instruction. "Arise and go thou... years". (8:1) Here are specific details regarding 1. Her immediate departure from her own country.

" Arise and go thou... " 2. Her sphere of responsibility. "Thou and thine household... " 3. The choice she had to make. "Sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn... " 4. The reason for the sudden emergency. "For the Lord hath called for a famine... " 5. The time involved. "And it shall also come upon the land seven years... " Here was a lady who received particular guidance. My, is this not the way God guides us God guides us His people in a number of ways. He guides us: 1. GENERALLY by His WORD: The psalmist says, "Thy Word...

"(Ps 119:105) The Word shows us the steps we should take. In the Bible there are clear directions and essential principles to guide and govern our lives, and where is a clear and unequivocal statement in the Scriptures no other guidance is needed. 2. SPECIFICALLY by His SPIRIT: For as we pray the Holy Spirit will impart a deepening conviction that a certain course is the will of God. Often in the NT we find the Holy Spirit constraining: at other times we find the Holy Spirit restraining. (Acts 16:7, 10) 3.

PROVIDENTIALLY Through CIRCUMSTANCES For if we believe that "all things", (Rom 8:28) then we must believe that God can guide us through providential circumstances. 4. INTERMEDIATELY by other BELIEVERS: For the Bible says, "In the multitude of counselors... " (Prov 11:14) In the case of this godly woman guidance came intermediately from the lip of Elisha. (a) (b) (c) SHE WAS GUIDED PARTIALLY: All of God's blueprint wasn't laid out before her. She was given no explanation as to what would happen to her during those seven years, and no prediction concerning what would happen after the seven years.

She was only given a partial plan, but she discovered", As thou goest step by step the way shall open up before thee". (Prov 4:12) My, this is the God deals with us. He does not set down before us a full-scale plan or program... mapping out every turn of the way, every hill of difficulty: every wilderness of trial: and every sea of struggle. Rather God leads us a step at a time. Why So that we might continually depend on Him! III: Elijah. (1)

(2) OBEDIENCE How did this woman respond to this revelation of the Lord's will Well, look at (8:2) Like her obedient ancestor, this daughter of Abraham went out not knowing whether she went. (Heb 11:8) She obeyed the Word of God which came through the servant of God. Now notice she obeyed this Divine Directive in spite of: (a) WHEN IT CAME: You see as yet there was no evidence of famine. There was still plenty in the land, her fields were still fruitful, her kitchen was still full: her crops were still fresh.

But she accepted the testimony of the man of God without the least hesitation and proceeded at once to act upon the warning so graciously given. The Lord Jesus said, " My sheep hear my voice", (Jn 10:4) and there is within every believer an instinctive recognition of the Lord's voice, combined with a desire to act upon what He says. My, the major difference spiritually speaking between, the Lord's sheep and goats is that sheep don't "BUT". Argumentativeness, hesitancy, and reluctance when the Lord has spoken may lead us into trouble.

III: Someone has said that "delayed obedience is disobedience". But here was a lady who calmly accepted the will of God as being "good, and acceptable, and perfect". (Rom 12:2) How have you responded to God's will for your life With Argument " Lord is the wisest thing for me" With Agitation " Lord does this really suit me" With Acceptance " Lord, I'm willing" My, when God call's you to do something which is contrary to human wisdom How do you respond She obeyed this... In spite of: (b) WHAT IT COST: " She went with her household...

"(8:2) She did not leave behind a member of her household to look after her property and possessions. There was no reliance at all upon human diplomacy. She put her case in the hands of the Lord and left

everything. What did it mean for her It meant Separation: It involved separation from her former circle of friends. And if there was one thing that was dear to her it was her home, her nationality, her people. (4:13) It meant Sacrifice: In her absence the family house and land were lost either snatched by squatters or confiscated by the king.

It meant Service: For here she was living in a foreign, hostile, darkened country. Here was opportunity for her to be an ambassador of Jehovah Here was an opportunity for her to be a witness to what she knew of Jehovah's might and mercy! She obeyed in spite of What it Cost. My, obedience to the Lord's will, will always cost. It may mean paying a price in terms of separation: sacrifice: service, but the Lord Jesus said, "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matt 19:29) My, are you determined to do God's will no matter what it may cost Are you prepared to go through with God irrespective of the price that has to be paid Have you ever come to the Lord and said, " Any time, any where, at any cost" What a woman this was.

She obeyed God's command in spite of (a)(b) (c) WHO IT CROSSED: Can you imagine the various objections that her neighbours would raise to such a fantastic plan and programme She might have been dubbed a fanatic. No doubt the various dangers and difficulties would have been pointed out as her friends sought to dissuade her. Do you know what I've discovered There will always be those who seek to turn us from the path of obedience. (Matt 16:22) Ill: I recall in my own experience a Christian man who sought to dissuade me from going into Bible College saying, " Any fire you have, or ability you have, they'll soon get rid of it."

Is some well meaning Christian saying something similar to you Is there someone who's seeking to dissuade you from doing the will of God My, remember you're responsible not to your friends, but to the Lord who's calling you! (1) (2) (3) PROVIDENCE What do we mean by providence While the actual word "providence", does not occur in the Bible the doctrine does. Providence "is that work of God in which He preserves all His creatures, is active in all that happens in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end".

Do you see God's providence here in: (a) The PROVISION Received by this Woman: Why did God send Elisha to her Because God is faithful and will not forsake His own. My, throughout all the movements of our earthly pilgrimage we have a God who knows: who cares: who provides. (Matt 6:32) (b) THE PROPERTY Restored to this Woman: Can you picture her making her way home after 7 years of exile Can you imagine the joy that fills her heart as she makes her way to Shunem But what a shock to discover that property and possessions have been taken over by others.

My ... (1) SEEMINGLY SHE LOST EVERYTHING: And why Every step she had taken was in obedience to the will of God. Was she being penalised for her obedience What disappointment! Is your heart filled with disappointment this... Does it seem that providence has dealt you a hard blow Is the enemy whispering in your ear, "This is what you get for obeying God, nothing but trial and disappointment". (1) (2) ACTUALLY SHE LOST NOTHING: For the Lord was working on her behalf. My, do you see this God overruled in relation to PERSONS: This woman needed to see the King to present her case to him and at the very time she sought an interview with the King, Gehazi was in his presence.

To TIME: Gehazi was telling the King about the boy's restoration just at the moment when the woman came in. "Why it's her! She's here... this is the boy's mother my lord, the one I'm telling you about. Ask

herself she'll tell you it's all true". To MOOD: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will". (Prov 21:1) And in this case the Lord turned the king's heart in favour toward the woman. TO REWARD: The result was that she had everything she had lost restored with interest. (8:6) " What a coincidence, "we say.

"How lucky for her... the king wouldn't have given her the time of day otherwise". No, My, not luck, not chance, and not coincidence. For the Lord had planned it all and His hand was in control. My, is it not the same with us The web of our history is composed of threads of many colours and yet all the seeming disjointed and conflicting events in our lives contribute to his perfect plan. My, infinite wisdom: love: power is at work on our behalf. We might never see the working of God's providence at the time but afterwards as we look back we "bless the hand that guided, and bless the heart that planned". (1) (2) (3) III: The story is told of the first Queen Elizabeth that she once asked a rich merchant to go to a remote country in her realm on a mission for England.

He replied that he could not possibly do this, for his absence might mean the ruin of his business. The Queen replied, "You look after my business abroad and I will look after four's at home". The merchant accepted the appointment and upon his return home discovered that he was much richer. This godly woman relinquished all in obedience to God: in God's time she received all again, with interest. She honoured God, God honoured her. Will you do that (1 Sam 2:30)

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