

How Does God Lead?

Acts 16:1-10 ▪ January 15, 2023 ▪ Abe Leedy

God primarily leads us through _____.

1 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Sometimes God leads us more _____.

He can lead through _____ from other Christians. (*Acts 16:1-4*)

He can lead through _____ or _____. (*Acts 16:9-10*)

He can lead through _____ _____. (*Acts 16:6-8*)

Acts 16:1-10

¹ Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴ As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily. ⁶ And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷ And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. ⁸ So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: What's a decision you are facing in your life right now that you're unsure about?

Read: Acts 16:1-10

1. The fact that Timothy "was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium" (v. 1) may have played a role in Paul inviting Timothy to serve on his ministry team (v. 3). As you make decisions, how much do you seek and follow the counsel of other believers? How do you decide when to listen to the perspective of others and when not to?
2. Acts 15 told of how the church leaders decided Gentiles should *not* be required to be circumcised. Was Paul's decision to circumcise Timothy a rejection of the decision of the church leaders (16:1-3)? Why or why not? (*Consider 1 Corinthians 9:20-23.*) What principles could we draw from Paul's choice to circumcise Timothy as we consider reaching others in our own cultural context?
3. Paul was being obedient to Jesus' command to go and share the Gospel with both Jews and Gentiles (*Acts 1:8; 9:15*). Yet as Paul did so, what were some specific questions he would have had that Scripture did not address? When we're facing questions for which Scripture does not give clear or specific answers, how should we decide what to do?
4. Verse 6 tells us Paul was "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia," and verse 7 says the "Spirit of Jesus did not allow them" to go into Bithynia—though in neither case are we told how this happened. What are some ways the Holy Spirit might stop us from doing something? How do you decide when to persist through obstacles and when to take those obstacles as a leading from the Lord to change plans?
5. Eventually Paul had a vision in the night in which he was told to "come over to Macedonia" (v. 9). How is this vision consistent with what we know of God's plan for Paul? It is clear that Paul concluded this vision was from God (v. 10). How might we conclude whether or not a dream or vision is from God? (*How could Romans 12:1-2 help with this?*)

Apply: How would you summarize the lessons we can gather from this passage on how God might lead us? What advice would you give to a younger Christian for how to seek God's leading and how that pursuit should involve Scripture?

Pray: Pray we would be people who seek to faithfully know God's Word, develop an intimate relationship with God, and be open and sensitive to various ways God might lead us.