

Talk 6 : How does God guide us?

One of the most significant claims of the Christian faith is that God gives guidance to those who follow him.

- the Bible is full of images of guidance
 - “the Lord is my shepherd”
 - “ a lamp for my path”

How does this happen in a practical sense? Where does this guidance come from? Here are some thoughts:

1. Through the Bible

Why read the Bible?

One good reason is that it gives guidance.

A bit like the office handbook.

In the same way the Bible acts as a manual, for example:

- the 10 Commandments have guided our legal system
- methodical and regular Bible study also provides personal focused guidance

2. Though a personal relationship

Guidance doesn't just require a guidebook. Sometimes you need a guide as well.

Sometimes the office manual doesn't provide the guidance we need.

Sometimes we need to talk to the boss.

What marks Christianity out from the other major world faiths (including atheism) is that Christians believe that they enjoy a personal relationship with God himself.

And by the way, when you want to be in touch with your boss, have you noticed email can make communication more immediate?...

Christians through prayer believe that they enjoy an immediate channel to their Chief Executive or Managing Director. Prayer is a bit like email:

- it is received immediately it is sent
- it may not get answered straight away (although sometimes it does)
- the Boss never puts the “out of office assistance” on, nor does he go on holiday.

But this personal relationship goes further than that.

Christians believe that a part of God lives within them. He's called the Holy Spirit and he is an important part in the whole process of receiving guidance. What is he like?

Some businesses have mentors or trainers, people who get alongside members of staff and encourage them or oversee their development. This has even become very popular in gyms. If you sign on at a gym, the instructor usually prepares a programme and if you are really keen you can hire your very own personal fitness consultant to motivate you and put you through your paces.

The Holy Spirit is a bit like that in a spiritual sense. He's a part of God that lives in Christians and helps them to communicate with God and in turn God communicates with them through him.

How does this happen? For me it's like this:

- when I read the Bible, ideas, problems, issues, people come to mind
- I pray about these things
- I'm given a strong desire to do something or not do something
- sometimes I even have dreams that prompt me
- sometimes I just feel led to do or say something

None of this is like a magic formula. God doesn't work like that. In fact, God is very big on the application of common sense.

3. Through Common Sense

Marx said religion is the opium of the people.

That's still the fear many people have: "If I follow this stuff I will have to switch off my brain."

Actually, the opposite is the case. Everywhere in the Bible God tells people to use their common sense. Check out these verses if you like:

Psalm 32:9 the horse

2Timothy 2:7 God gives insight

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

4. Through Advice

Christians ought not be like "The Lone Ranger".

Think about how useful it is to network in your business. We keep learning about business by talking to others. So too guidance for a Christian comes from talking to others and taking advice from them.

Psalm 12 .15 the wise listen to advice

Psalm 15.22 plans fail for lack of counsel

5. Through Circumstances

Doors open

- exam results go in your favour or against you
- relationships are formed at unlikely times in unlikely ways
- God specialises in coincides...

**God can and does guide us – through one or a combination of the above means.
Maybe you can think of other ways he does this too.**