

Challenge

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PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

Psaln 25 – Discerning God's path for life.

I think if there is one question that I have been asked over and over again is the issue of – how do I know God's will or direction for me in my Christian life? It appears for some it is a lot harder question to answer than for others as some Christians really struggle to discern God's leading and direction for them. In this Psalm David I think gives us some encouraging details as to how to go about knowing God's direction.

(1) In verses 1 to 7 the first point I want to make is to let God direct our paths. I think David is saying here that he is first of all declaring his need of God in knowing His purpose and direction. So this is why David then, as it were shouts out my God I trust in you. I think this is really important to understand because it really is the basic building block upon which we determine God's will and purpose. If we are not trusting in God to start with and are looking to other things, gimmicks, trends, fads and the like then we will find it very difficult indeed to know what it is that God is saying to us. Closely linked to this trust in God is in verses 2b to 3 an expression of one's confidence in God. Again this is critical in knowing God's leading and direction because if we don't have an expectation, a confidence expectation that God is going to lead then there really is no point in looking to Him for His direction and purpose for your life. I think it is sad to say that for many Christians knowing and expressing a desire to know God's leading is often a distant thought. It usually is not until someone is deeply in trouble that suddenly they get a revelation that they need to seek God for His direction. I would hope and pray that for those of us who really mean business for God seeking His will and purpose for our lives is our first thought rather than an after thought.

(2) Then secondly to let God direct our paths is David's declaration of his need to be guided by God. Looking at verse 4 David gives four key things as far as showing His declaration or expressing His declaration of wanting to know God's will.

- In verse four David cries out to God to show him God's direction. I think that this first of all tells us that in seeking God's will we need to come humbly before God and recognise that it is God's will and His alone that we want to seek and not some rubber stamping of our own agenda. Sometimes I hear people express their frustration at the fact that God has not shown them clearly what He wants. However, after a discussion with these people it doesn't take long to realise that the mistake that they have made is that they have not been asking God to show them His ways but rather asking God to rubber stamp their ways. There is a world of difference between the two.
- Then we see a desire to be guided by God when David asks God to teach him His ways. His paths. Again this not only speaks of humility but speaks of a teachable spirit. There is nothing more difficult and frustrating when dealing with someone who is only young in the Lord but unfortunately in not teachable in the Lord. Sadly you will find these sort of people will get themselves into all sorts of trouble because they are not willing to listen to instruction and indeed take on board Godly instruction and as a result find themselves in deep trouble.
- Then David asks for the Lord to lead him in truth. This speaks very clearly of relying upon the truth of God's word for direction. I think Psalm 119 verse 130 gives good guidance in this matter when it says "the entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" and again later on in that same Psalm in verse 133 it says "Direct my steps by your word and let no iniquity have dominion over me". So I think it is clear that David's desire is that God has absolute control in leading and directing him in every step of his life.
- Then David reiterates his desire to be taught of God. In the New Testament context being taught of God comes by knowing a fullness of the Spirit of God so that He would prompt us and lead us and direct us in the way that He would have us go.
- (3) Then in knowing God's direction for our lives David declares his desire for God to remember. Now in verse 6 he says "Remember Oh Lord your tender mercies" so first of all it is David's desire that whatever happens to him that it happens according to the tender mercies of God. I think Lamentations 3 verse 22 sums up what David is trying to say here "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed because His compassions fail not." Then David declares his desire for God to remember His loving kindnesses. This speaks to the character of God in how He deals with us. That even in leading us He wants to do it in a way that is an expression of His loving kindness and His desire to do what is best for us. I am amazed at times when people talk about knowing the will of God but somehow or other they are fearful because they think that God will direct them in a way that is not very nice. The reality is that God knows exactly what He is doing and the motivation behind all that He does in leading us is His overwhelming love. I can honestly say after nearly twenty five years in Challenge that it has been the most amazing Bible College, the most amazing learning experience that I could of ever asked for. I never realised what God had in mind when He brought me into this work but I can assure you there is no doubt in my estimation that all that God has done has been according to His tender mercies, His loving kindness and His goodness. I believe God has always been motivated by these three characteristics in guiding and leading all of His children in His paths, in His ways for His glory.

(4) Then not only do we see that we need to let God direct our paths in verses 1 to 7 but we also need to let God be trusted in all situations in verses 8 to 14. Now why is this so important? Well again we come back to the characteristics of God as we see in verse 8 that first of all God is good and upright in all that He does. I think there are times when we as the Lord's people may question God's motives for doing certain things but we need to recognise that His character is always good and everything He does is always upright and there are no exemptions to that. I think also we need to recognise that when we are looking to the Lord for His direction He does not want to make it difficult but rather He wants to make it as simple and clear as possible because all that He desires for us is good and upright.

(5) Then we need to realise that God desires humility as we see in verse 9 where he states the humble He guides in justice or as such in just ways and the humble He teaches His way. It is interesting to see particularly in the world of sport these days

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the amazing level of arrogance that is expressed in how well someone has done. In the Christian life it is very important to come with an overwhelming sense of humility because we want to know that first of all we are seeking to do God's will and not our will and that we want to be Christians that really count for God as He directs us. Then we need to see also that humility is the soil in which God directs our paths. God is not interested in speaking into the life of a person who is arrogant or who is set by pride because basically this just illustrates the fact that self is their God and not Jehovah. In 1st Peter chapter 5 and verse 5 Peter says this "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble". It continues to say in verse 6 "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exult you in due time casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you." Then we need to see that in humility we pray and honour God's word as verse 10 of Psalm 25 states "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies" and then we see last but not least that in humility we can know God's forgiveness. This is such an important aspect of understanding the fear of the Lord and what it means to walk in obedience to the Lord that indeed we might experience God's blessing. The word secret there in verse 14 means intimate conversation plans and purposes. So as we come with genuine humility we can come into a level of intimacy with God as we converse with Him in prayer and as a result of that He reveals to us His plans and purposes for our lives. I can assure you there is nothing more exciting than that.

(6) Then let God give us the victory in verses 15 to 22. I think what is key to us in these last two verses is our focus. We need to keep our focus on God and not on the issues. I think it is important for us as we see in verse 15 where David says "My eyes are ever toward the Lord". David was really talking about the fact that whatever the struggles whether they be loneliness whether they be a brokenness of heart whether it be regrets whether it be struggles against an enemy He is saying to you and I that we need to keep our eyes continuously on the Lord.

But critical to all of this is keeping a right relationship with God. We see there in verse 18 that we need to confess our sins and in essence keep a right relationship with God. So in all of that as we keep a right relationship with God then we can express our confidence in God's deliverance as we see in verses 19 to 20. David was looking at the enemies and he could see that they were many. Indeed the word overwhelming comes to mind. How many of us have felt overwhelmed by a lack of finances to pay bills or have felt overwhelmed by a broken relationship or have felt deeply hurt by a friend or so on and yet David is saying to us that as we pray as we kept our focus on the Lord as we keep that right relationship with God we can have confidence in God's deliverance.

(7) Then in closing we need to commit to walking with God in integrity and uprightness. Verse 21 really is all about how we as the Lord's people as we know God's will that we walk in His will. His purpose. His plans and as we do that we are a great testimony for the living God. It is sad to say friends that much of the witness of the church today has been weaned away by a constant level of worldliness so much so that the world considers us all but irrelevant. So I think it is important that we recognise that walking in integrity and uprightness keeps us from walking in an attitude of despair or an attitude of hopelessness because if we fall into those ways of thinking we find that we lose hope and tragically surrender our future to the enemy.

So my encouragement to you friends is that we keep our focus on the Lord that we look to seek His will and purposes for our lives as we look to Him through His word and through prayer and through genuine humility. My prayer is that you would know and experience what He wants for you.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge

Praise:

1. Praise the Lord for the great opportunities Carl had to share about the ministry of Challenge while in the United States and for the Lord's care and safety while he travelled.
 2. Praise God for all the folk who give on a regular basis to the work of Challenge.
 3. Praise God for our faithful volunteers who do a fantastic job particularly with the wrapping of Challenge each month.
 4. Praise God for the continued financial support from the NSW Bible Society in providing bibles for ministry into African prisons. Through the distribution of the Challenge newspaper inmates can apply to do a bible course and are provided with a bible as a part of that course. One of the workers who ministers into the prisons quoted: "It is a joy to see such hunger for the truth. To think that this is their only past-time while in prison, allows us to believe that the entrance of God's Word will bring light and then bring life".
- ## Prayer:
1. Pray for the Lord's leading and direction for the Challenge Board members as they prayerfully make decisions for the future vision and growth of the Challenge ministry.
 2. Pray for each of the Challenge writers who contribute monthly to the paper that they will be open to God's direction for their articles.
 3. Pray that the new church contacts that were made while Carl was in the United States in April will bear fruit so next year he will have the opportunity to share more about the ministry of Challenge.
 4. Pray for Harold Peasley's visit to Perth in May. He will be here for three weeks helping Carl with some promotional work for the Challenge ministry in Africa. Pray also for the work of Multi Ministries.

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