

# Ways Paul Was Led

ACC - Men's Winter Retreat Feb 2011

## Foundational Concepts

### 1) The Lord creates us for a purpose

**Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

### 2) He has prepared in advance the things He wants us to do

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

### 3) He wants us to know his will

**Ephesians 5:17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

**Hebrews 13:20 - 21** May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*[see also Ephesians 5:17 Colossians 1:9 Colossians 4:12]*

**Comment:** *It makes sense to begin a discussion about the leading of the Lord with these foundational concepts. These Scriptures show the Lord is very engaged in our lives and provide us a sense of His purpose, calling and divine help enabling us to accomplish the things He created us to do. We should settle forever in our hearts the ideas that:*

- *He knows me*
- *He has set me apart for His purpose even before my birth*
- *He has prepared in advance the work He wants me to do*
- *He wants me to know His will and equips me to do His will*

# The Posture of Paul's Heart Contributed to His Being Led ...He Acknowledged Christ As Lord & And Yielded His Heart

## 1) When Paul met Jesus - he asked the two most important questions

**Acts 22:8-10 - Who are you, Lord? - What shall I do, Lord?**

**...at the beginning - he yielded himself to the Lords instruction**

**Acts 9:3 - 6** As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. **"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."**

**...throughout his life - he was committed to know and pursue the Lord's purpose**

**Philippians 3:12 -14** Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if **that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus**. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

**...at the end - his focus was to complete the task the Lord had given him**

Acts 20:22 - 24 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, **I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me**—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

**Comment:** *The state of Paul's heart was yielded, surrendered, submitted; and he carried this with him throughout his life...this is the optimal condition of heart for the will of God to intersect our lives. What benefit is there of knowing or seeking His will if we intend to go our own way.*

**Comment:** *We need to be willing to do the will of God once we understand it...The issue is never about WHETHER He leads us, it is more about the state of our heart to follow once we understand His leading*

# The Posture of Paul's Heart Contributed to His Being Led ...He Was Zealous to Extend the Kingdom of God

***Comment:** Paul constantly looked for opportunities to extend the kingdom and the Lord worked through him. If we are about the Lord's work, we should expect the Lord to provide guidance. In **Acts 19:1 - 20** Paul took a trip to Ephesus and you can see that in every interaction he sought the opportunity to bring the kingdom of God to bear.*

- Matthew 6:10 your kingdom come, **your will be done on earth** as it is in heaven.
- 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the **kingdom of God is** not a matter of talk but of **power**.
- Luke 11:20 But **if I drive out demons** by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.
- Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "**The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe** the good news!"
- Luke 10:8 - 9 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. **Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'**"

## **Acts 19:1-20**

### **vs 1-7 - He wanted to see people baptized in the Holy Spirit**

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

### **vs 8- to argue the truths of Jesus with the Jews**

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, **arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.**

### **vs 9 - to teach the responsive brothers**

But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. **He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.**

### **vs 10 - two years of teaching resulted in outreach throughout the province of Asia**

This went on for two years, **so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.**

### **vs 11-12 - extraordinary miracles through Paul**

God did **extraordinary miracles through Paul**, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

### **Vs 13 - 20 - casting out of devils and overcoming witchcraft in the city**

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, **“In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.”** Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?” Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. **A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly.** When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of **the Lord spread widely and grew in power.**

# The Posture of Paul's Heart Contributed to His Being Led ...Taking Initiative - You Can Only Steer a Moving Ship

***Comment:** If a boat is anchored in a harbor it can't be steered, if it is sitting still you can't turn it...movement creates the opportunity for the ship to be steered. Paul moved forward in the general calling to be [Acts 9:15] "my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel"; and that movement in the general plan put him in a position of finding the more specific plan "come over to Macedonia to help us".*

## **1) Paul was going generally throughout a region - and the Spirit guided him specifically**

**Acts 16:6 - 10** Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, **having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.** When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, **but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.** So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." **After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

## **2) Paul sought out opportunities - and the Lord showed up**

**Acts 16:13 - 18** On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, **where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak** to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. **The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.**

## **3) Every Act prompted by your faith**

**2 Thessalonians 1:11-12** ...we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that **by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith...**

## **4) Peter come out of the boat**

**Matthew 14:28 - 29** "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, **"tell me to come to you on the water."** "Come," he said...

## **5) Jonathan and armor bearer**

**1 Sam 14:6-10** ..."Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. **Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf..."**

# Specific Ways Paul Was Led

## ...Through the Use of The Gifts of the Spirit (see 1 Cor 12:7-11)

### 1) The Gift of A Word of Knowledge

**Acts 9:10 -16** In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "**Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.**"

*Comment: - (This was a word of knowledge expressed via a vision and the voice of the Lord - The Knowledge? a specific house on a specific street, a specific person, doing a specific thing, and who had a vision of you coming to visit him and healing him). We see here that the Lord spoke to both parties involved so as to provide a strong confirmation to the will of the Lord. Both Paul and Ananias were given this knowledge independently - each knew what the Lord was doing with the other and what to expect. We see a similar scenario with **Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10:19-32***

### 2) Perception - Word of Knowledge & Gift of Healing

**Acts 14:7-10** ...they continued to preach the good news. In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, **saw [KJV perceiving] that he had faith to be healed** and called out, "**Stand up on your feet!**" **At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.**

### 3) The Gift of Discerning of Spirits

**Acts 16:16 - 18** we were met by a **slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future...**This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." ...**Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit,** "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment **the spirit left her.**

### 4) The Working of Miracles

**Acts 19: 11-12** God did **extraordinary miracles through Paul,** so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

### 5) Perception - Word of Knowledge

**Acts 27:10** And said unto them, Sirs, **I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage,** not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

## **6) Working of Miracles - Gifts of Healing**

**Acts 28:3 - 5 and 7 - 9** Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." **But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects...** There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius... His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and **healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.**

# Specific Ways Paul Was Led

## ...Through Visions, Visitations and the Voice of the Spirit

### 1) The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision

**Acts 18:6 - 11** ... One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

### 2) The voice of an angel, the voice of the Spirit (example in the life of another)

**Acts 8:26 - 30** Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch... The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet...

### 3) Compelled by the Spirit

**Acts 20:22 -24** “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.

### ...Sometimes well meaning brothers do not have the will/purpose of God in mind

**Acts 21:4 -14** Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying good-by to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home...After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”...When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

*Comment: Be careful when basing decisions on a word of prophecy. We are told to test everything and hold to that which is good...While the Lord does indeed lead us through prophecy,we must remember that the Holy Spirit is still working through flawed vessels... we must also bring sound evaluation and judgement to those words, and*



*ultimately in the end we need to obey God. Also keep in mind from our earlier comment - many times prophetic words are a confirmation of things the Lord has already spoken to your heart.*

**...Test everything and hold to what is good**

**1 Thessalonians 5:19 - 21** Do not put out the Spirit's fire; **do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good.**

#### **4) Visit from the Lord**

**Acts 23:11**The following night **the Lord stood near Paul and said**, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

#### **5) A prophetic word - word of knowledge from Ananias & the voice of the Lord in a vision**

**Acts 22:12 - 21** "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. "Then he said: '**The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.** And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, **I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'** "'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' "**Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'**"

# Specific Ways Paul Was Led ...Through The Ministry of a Prophet

## 1) A future Prediction - to which the church responded

**Acts 11:27-30** During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, **sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.**

## 2) A Call to Ministry - through prayer and fasting, confirmed and released them

**Acts 13:1 -3** In the church at Antioch **there were prophets and teachers:** Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."** So after they had fasted and prayed, **they placed their hands on them and sent them off.**

## 3) A future prediction - to offer comfort and encouragement

**Acts 21:10 -11** After we had been there a number of days, **a prophet named Agabus came down** from Judea. Coming over to us, **he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said,** "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

## Specific Ways Paul Was Led

### ...Through God's Intervening Through Others

**Acts 23:15 - 23** Someone heard of the plot to assassinate Paul and told those in authority

**Acts 11:25 - 26** Then **Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch.** So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

- Jesus chose the 12
- Paul chose Timothy
- Paul chose John Mark

Paul chose Silas

# Specific Ways Paul Was Led

## ...Through Our Response to the Lord's Initiative

**Acts 11:19 - 26** Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and **began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.** When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then **Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.** The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

### Similar event

**Acts 8:14-17** When the apostles in Jerusalem **heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.** When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 13:6 - 8** They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, **sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.** But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

**Acts 13:14 - 16** From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "**Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak.**" Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me!

## Specific Ways Paul Was Led

### ...Through Opposition - Opposition is Sometimes an Open Door into the Lord's Next Adventure

***Point of Wisdom** - When opposition comes - seek His wisdom - it may be an open door to the Lord's next adventure - when things don't work out or when there is opposition, sometimes it is the Lord's intervention - open your eyes, ears and heart*

**1) A shipwreck because of a great storm took Paul to another location where he did not intend to go on his own - and many were healed**

Acts 27:21 - 26 & Acts 28:7 - 9

**2) An earthquake - Philipian Jailer and his household was saved**

Acts 16:25 - 31

**3) Opposition in one city led them to another city where a lame man was healed**

Acts 14:1 - 10

**4) Rejection led them to other cities where a large number of people were saved**

Acts 14:19-22

**5) Opposition led them to take receptive people and teach for 2 years - all of Asia heard the word of the Lord - and extra-ordinary miracles were performed by Paul**

Acts 19:8 - 12

# Specific Ways Paul Was Led

## ...Through Common Sense, Wisdom and Human Emotion That is Steeped in Kingdom Principles

### **1) Common sense - when you don't have a specific word from the Lord, you have common sense and the wisdom from God's word to guide you**

Acts 17:10 As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue.

### **2) Acting wisely on known information**

Acts 9:23 - 25 and Acts 9:29 - 30 After many days had gone by, **the Jews conspired to kill him**, but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his **followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall**. ...He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

### **3) He was greatly distressed**

Acts 17:16 - 17 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.