

Lesson 164

TEXT Exodus 13:17-22; 14:19-31

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES 2 Samuel 5:18-25; Psalm 29:1-11; Acts 16:6-10

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that God has promised to instruct those who look to Him for guidance. Sometimes this guidance may come as a specific directive, while at other times it may be a step-by-step experience.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. — Psalm 32:8

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. — Isaiah 30:21

ANSWER TITLE: **God Taught Me a Lesson**
SEARCH TITLE: **Guidance**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The Red Sea is about 1200 miles long and nowhere wider than 200 miles. Its average depth is about 2000 feet. It covers about 160,000 square miles, an area a little larger than that of California.

There are two different types of guidance available to the Christian: general guidelines and specific directions.

A Christian receives general guidelines from the Bible. Before entering into any activity, a Christian should ask himself, "Does the thing I am thinking about doing conflict with my values? Does it conflict with the Bible's values?"

These questions will help to eliminate bad choices. A Christian can also find guidance through reading about the lives of people in the Bible. If we observe what kind of decisions led to heartache, we can choose an alternative. If we follow Christ, using Jesus' life as a model, we will find that many decisions will be easier to make.

God also gives specific directions to people. He may ask a person to move (as He did Abraham and Jacob) or He might direct a person to a position of authority (as He did Moses and David). We receive specific guidance from God by praying and seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit.

YOUR OPENER

Guidance

TEXT: Exodus 13:17-22, 14:19-31

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 2 Samuel 5:18-25; Psalm 29:1-11; Acts 16:6-10

KEY VERSE: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. — Isaiah 30:21

RESPONSES

1. God would not direct the Israelites through the land of the Philistines lest when they faced war, they would want to return to Egypt. Have the students rehearse an experience (their own or someone else's) of how God led, in what seemed a roundabout way, to a definite objective. Sum up the question with the thought that God knows the end from the beginning and has good reason for all He does.

2. The pillar of fire went before to show the way by night, and the pillar of cloud was a shadow from the heat during the day. These represented God's guidance and protection, for not only did the fire and cloud guide the Children of Israel, but they stood between them and the enemy when danger was imminent. Some benefits enjoyed by the Children of Israel were; no loss of lives, a safe crossing, and a first-hand knowledge that God cared for them. If we want the benefit of God's guidance, we must walk in the way He shows us.

3. The devil hates to lose his subjects to God's salvation, therefore he will make many attempts to destroy those who are saved from sin. Discuss how the Egyptians sought to overtake the Israelites but this turned out to be the way of death, because they were actually going against God and His way. The Israelites were safe in their way as they were following God's guidance. Psalm 73:24

4. Moses' words were: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." "The LORD shall fight for you." Discuss with your students that God's guidance is not necessarily a guarantee of a trouble-free pathway, but following His guidance is a guarantee of victory! Peter was put into prison and Herod thought to kill him, but as the church continued in earnest prayer, an angel brought about his release. What about Daniel and the three Hebrew children? These are examples of God's allowing troublesome times, which exemplify His power of deliverance. Give your students an opportunity to explain what Romans 8:31 means to them.

God used the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day to guide the Children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land. Note that one has to follow God's guidance in order to receive the benefit of it. The pillar of fire was light to Israel, but it was darkness to the Egyptians who were trying to recapture their former slaves. In like manner the Gospel is the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. The Stone laid in Zion "is a sure foundation," or "a stone of stumbling," depending upon our following or rejecting Him. See Isaiah 28:16 and 1 Peter 2:6-8.

1. God led the Children of Israel through the wilderness of the Red Sea on their way to the Promised Land. Why do you think He did this, even though it was not the most direct route?

2. God used a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire to guide the Israelites. List some of the benefits of these manifestations.

3. The Egyptians pursued the Israelites, wanting to capture them. What parallel might be drawn between this occurrence and the opposition a newly-delivered Christian faces?

4. The Children of Israel were afraid when they saw the Egyptian army. What did Moses say (Exodus 14:13,14)? What promise does God give His followers today? See Romans 8:31.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. God divided the Red Sea after Moses stretched out his rod over it. At the point where Bible commentator, Adam Clarke, places the crossing, the water was estimated to have been more than 80 feet deep and approximately 12 miles across. The Bible says that as Moses stretched out his hand, the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong wind, and caused the ground to be dry. The people crossed over this dry ground while the waters stood as walls on either side of them. God is a God of miracles. Describe in detail how God destroyed the Egyptians.

6. In 2 Samuel 5:18-25, David was confronted with two battles which seemed to be similar. After asking God's direction, however, he found that God didn't choose to operate in the same manner both times. To what can we attribute David's success?

7. What happens when people do not walk in the way God has revealed? Give a Biblical example to substantiate your answer.

8. In Acts 16:6-10, what two means did God use to guide His missionaries?

9. What one point have you learned regarding guidance? How would you encourage a person who is seeking God's guidance?

5. The hearts of the Egyptians were hardened, and they followed Israel into the sea with their whole army. God troubled them by taking off their chariots' wheels. Then God directed Moses to stretch out his rod again, causing the sea to return to its place, thus drowning the armies of Egypt. Review with the class that though God promises guidance to those who serve Him, the sinner must find his own way. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). It seemed right to the Egyptians to follow Israel into the sea, but it proved to be their destruction. The devil makes big promises, but "the way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15).

6. Your students should see that though the situations appeared to be similar, David did not rely on his own perception of the matter. He could have assumed that the Israelite army should deal with the enemy the same in both cases. But instead, he looked to God for guidance, and then obeyed the instructions he received. God directed him differently for each battle. Discuss the thought that God is all-wise, knowing the end from the beginning. The method He gives to attain success in one instance may not be the best for every occasion.

7. Your students will probably be able to offer a variety of examples to support the thought that taking our own way brings disastrous results. Some possibilities: the prophet who disobeyed (1 Kings 13:1-24); Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:4); Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3,15).

8. They were forbidden by the Spirit to preach in Asia. Then God gave Paul a vision of the man from Macedonia. This is a good example of being guided step by step. Discuss how the missionaries were eager to reach new territory and people who had never heard the Gospel. God did not explain why He did not allow them into Asia. It is commendable that the disciples did not become discouraged. Being refused once, some people give up, but God is faithful to those who trust Him, and in due time He shows His will.

9. As your students offer their responses to these two questions, you will be provided with an opportunity to sum up their thoughts as a closing for your lesson. Encourage them to keep their communication with the Lord finely tuned.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What are some of the major events in life in which guidance would be helpful?

Who can expect the guidance of God?

How do we know if God is guiding us, or if our own desire is guiding us?

People look to various avenues for guidance: marriage counselors, school counselors, career counselors, self-help books, role models, etc. What do you think about these sources of guidance? How can they be helpful? How can they be harmful?

How can we know God is instructing us?

Why is it important to ask God to guide our life?

Give an example of a time God directed a circumstance in your life.

In our ANSWER story, what sequence of events helped the author realize he needed God's guidance? Can you think of a similar situation in your life when circumstances helped you see that?

THINGS TO DO

Have your students make a map with directions on how to get from your town to Heaven. The map should be hand drawn with names of towns and places similar to those in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Direct the students as they detail the map and decide where to go next. Have them put in alternate routes which, though they may bypass obstacles (mountains, etc.), won't lead to Heaven. Bring out the importance of following God's guidance even though it would seem easier to do things another way.

A magnet and nails could be used to show us how God will guide us when we have given Him our lives. When the magnet is near, the nails can be pulled here and there. But if the nails get too far from the magnet, they will no longer respond to the pull of the magnet. Just so, we must stay close to God so He can be our guide.

COAT OF ARMS — Provide each student with a paper on which the outline of a coat of arms has been drawn. Have the students draw items in each section of the coat of arms to represent an area in which God has given, or will give guidance. Let them share their drawings.

Bring to class an object indicative of guidance: a compass, map, directions for assembling something, etc. Compare this to the Bible—our spiritual guide.

On separate slips of paper, have your class match up the following Bible characters with the correct description of how God gave them guidance:

- This person sought God's guidance in waging war.
- This man was to move away from home.
- God told this person to return home.
- This man was to assume leadership.
- The Holy Spirit was this man's travel guide.
- This man sought God's guidance in a marriage.

Abraham (Genesis 12:1)

Servant of Abraham (Genesis 24:12-14)

Jacob (Genesis 31:3)

Moses (Exodus 3:10)

David (2 Samuel 5:19)

Paul (Acts 16:6-10)

Answers for ANSWER

