

"CHOICES AND LEADING IN PIONEERING"

Acts 16:6-10

One of the practical issues facing disciples: How do you know where to go when first going out? Going to look at some factors – both spiritual and practical that help us find direction.

I. METHODS OF LEADING

A. In ministry we want to make the best choice possible – one that has the best chance of success/blessing

1. Above all else, we need to have confidence that this is God's work!

a. It's His plan – so it is in His best interest to guide us so we can make a good choice

B. We need to recognize that God leads us in different ways

1. Direct leading: God is able to speak to us and tell us what to do

a. *Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

1. *I had this happen once: God clearly told me to go to South Africa*

b. But this will also need to be balanced against what our Pastor says

1. We may feel b/c God spoke we have to go there – now; *Our Pastor may see other factors*

a. His wisdom may help us avoid making an unwise choice

2. Stirring/drawing: God stirs people to be interested in places

a. This is not a clear voice of God – but it is the Holy Spirit causing us to be interested in a place

1. *Where we are from/where we went to school/where we have family/where we stationed in military*

b. Sometimes we are stirred for a place we have no natural connection to

1. Why there – and not another place? God! 2. God stirs us to pray – then perhaps to go

3. Sometimes God may stir us to pray – for someone else to go

a. *We went to Launceston, Tasmania: Other people had been praying for that city – we went!*

3. Trouble/Closed doors: Sometimes what we have in mind/what we plan does not work out

a. *V6 forbidden of the Holy Spirit V7 the Spirit would not allow*

b. *Acts 16: thrown in jail Acts 17: beaten/run out of town*

c. But this is sometimes God's will! *Johannesburg: I wanted to go to Albertain. No housing. Man in charge of halls said we do not want churches in our halls! Then no response in Mondeor. But that is ultimately what led me to Eldorado Park.*

4. Personal preference vs. Pastoral direction: Acts 16:10 *Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

a. **Pioneering vs. Taking a church;** Some men do better at one or the other; Pastor helps/need shows

5. Common sense: In the absence of a direct voice of God – we use common sense reasoning

a. There are places that don't make sense for us to go to at first

1. *A small town boy going to a huge metropolis* 2. *An expensive city without job skills to survive* 3. *Big \$/small church*

b. Sanctified investigating: Search for a place using logic

1. *Where are there no churches?* 2. *Where are people likely to respond (people moving/willing to change)*

3. *What kind of people are most responsive? (Mexicans/military/ethnics* 4. *What kind of place should be avoided?*

5. *What is the cost of living? Building costs (you can Google demographics/cost of living)*

a. *1st pioneering: I looked for cities 50,000-500,000; That made the most sense for me*

II. HEARTS THAT ARE HELPED

A. You need Flexibility in order to be led of God

1. You may something in mind: Circumstances/Pastor/need may change that

a. You flex: Roll with that – this is all part of God's will

B. Obedience: Whatever God shows/however God leads – we need to obey

C. Trust in God: You have to trust that God is in control

1. *Psalms 37:23 the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and he delights in his way.*

III. BLESSING FOLLOWS OBEDIENCE

A. Sometimes new areas are opened for the work of God

1. *Romans 15:20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,*

B. The greatest blessing: Specific hearts that are opened/lives that are changed

1. *Acts 16:14-15 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵ And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.*