

3 Ways to Discern God Is Moving You in a New Direction

There invariably will come a time in our spiritual journey when the Lord will solicit our cooperation in permitting Him to guide us in a new way. His preference is that we would sense His leading, fully cooperate and move in the new direction.

However, as is all too often the case, He must intervene in the affairs of our lives due to the fact that we are comfortable and entrenched in our present course of action.

To secure our attention and place us on the pathway God desires, there are strategies that He employs that are very effective. As much as we are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:11), we must be even more knowledgeable of the ways of the Lord (Ps. 25:4). Knowing God's ways will result in us experiencing His mighty acts (Ps. 103:7).

Here are three ways God works to move us in a new direction:

- Disruption of Our Plans
- Dissipation of Resources
- Dissolution of Relationships

Disruption of our Plans

The Apostle Paul had received an apostolic commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. In keeping with his mandate, he targeted key cities in the Roman Empire to visit. Yet, the New Testament narrative informs us that on at least one occasion he was not able to fulfill his objective because God saw fit to stop him. "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they came near Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not allow them" (Acts

16:6-7).

Like Paul the apostle, while attempting to do the will of the Lord, perhaps you were heading down a certain roadway and you ended up “hitting a wall” and were stopped in your tracks. From that point on, no matter how hard you worked, you were incapable of making significant progress. Initiatives and projects that were originally inspired by a lofty vision and deep passion ended up languishing, some of them even terminating.

When stuck at an impasse, it is a natural tendency to return to familiar surroundings. We see this in the lives of the disciples after Jesus’ death. They went back to fishing even though they had clearly been mandated to forsake their vocation and follow Christ (See Luke 5:10-11; John 21:3). Because they were commercial fishermen, there may even have been economic motives behind their actions. Nevertheless, we see clearly that there was no lasting provision and no permanent peace in returning to past environments.

When God leads us out of a place of familiarity and the way forward is blocked, what is the solution?

There are some breakthroughs reserved for us that can only be accessed through prayer. We must seek God until we receive a clear answer from heaven. Whether it was Paul’s night vision of the man in Macedonia summoning him, or the voice of Jesus speaking to the disciples on the seashore in Galilee, the New Testament Christians received clear direction from the Spirit and were able to regain momentum and experience breakthrough.

Dissipation of Resources

When God wants us to move in a new direction, He may also permit us to experience the dissipation of resources. Elijah had been powerfully used by the Lord to declare prophetically the purpose of God in dealing with Israel. “And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the

Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word" (1 Kin. 17:1) And just as the prophet had foretold, the word of the Lord came to pass. "And there was a severe famine in Samaria ... "(1 Kin. 18:2).

During the famine, God looked after Elijah. He gave him specific instruction relative to how he would be sustained. "Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.' So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook" (1 Kings 17:2-6).

Cherith which means "place of covenant," was where the Lord demonstrated His faithfulness in taking care of Elijah. However, the day would come when the brook would run dry and the birds would no longer fly (see 1 Kin. 17:7). Although Elijah had come to depend on such provision, God seemed to have no compunction at all cutting off these resources.

Has Your Brook Dried Up?

Have you experienced something similar? Your streams of resource have dried up. You struggle to make ends meet and you do not know how you are going to keep going. During such a time, trust that the Lord will soon speak to you like He did to Elijah. "Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you'" (1 Kin. 17:8-9).

More than a cute cliché, you will see that the place where He leads you will be the place where He feeds you. Where the Lord

guides, He provides!

Dissolution of Relationships

A third way the Lord works to set us in motion in a new direction is through the dissolution of certain relationship. (Please note: we are not addressing covenant marriage relationships here). We see this clearly in the life of David. The heart of King Achish, once favorable to David, turned away from him." Then Achish called David and said to him, 'Surely, as the Lord lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines'" (1 Sam. 29:6-7).

An unanticipated meltdown in a relationship can cause great pain. Abandonment and unanswered questions will naturally follow. One vital truth to come to grips with is that God will on occasion send certain people into our lives for a short season or perhaps even a brief encounter.

God-sanctioned, transitory connections, though nonsustainable, serve a purpose in facilitating the plan of the Lord. Being able to differentiate between what is intended to be provisional and what is meant to be permanent will enlighten one of the Father's intention for the relationship.

Here is a powerful truth to embrace when a key connection you value has dissolved for no apparent legitimate reason: The Lord is turning the hearts of men in the direction He desires (Prov. 21:1) and is in fact making it easier for you to let go and move forward into your next assignment. Therefore, do not take the matter personally and become bitter with people as though they are rejecting you.

Trusting in God's Good Guidance

You may not understand what is currently happening in your life. Does it seem to you that God has messed up your plans? Have resources dried up? Has a relationship disintegrated?

Sometimes Father God's ways do not make sense to us. Scripture even attests to this reality. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55:9). This is because the LORD possesses infinite knowledge and perfect wisdom. He is eternal, Almighty and omniscient. He sees the end from the beginning and is completely aware of the final outcome of all things.

No matter how it may appear on the surface, He is actively involved in the affairs of our lives. On occasion, He may even interrupt our plans resulting in us experiencing a sense of anxiety due to a perceived loss of control. However, as uncomfortable as we may become, we must trust that He is leading us along the best pathway for our lives. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye on you" (Ps. 32:8).

Trusting God at all times is a non-negotiable prerequisite for living supernaturally in the kingdom!

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