

# How Does God Direct Us?

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman's sermon explores how God directs us through various means, emphasizing the importance of obedience and understanding our motives.*

**Duration:** 55:29

**Scripture:** Jonah 1:1

**Topics:** "Obedience to God", "Divine Direction"

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## Description

Shane Idleman explores how God directs us through the story of Jonah, emphasizing the importance of understanding God's guidance in our lives. He discusses the various ways God communicates, including through scripture, prayer, and godly counsel, while also addressing the challenges of disobedience and the consequences of fleeing from God's presence. The sermon highlights the significance of testing our motives, seeking biblical alignment, and waiting for God's timing in decision-making. Shane encourages the congregation to reflect on their own lives and consider how they can better align with God's direction.

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## Transcript

The title of this message tonight, we're actually starting, I'm going to go through the book of Jonah. I thought I would just do it tonight and get through it, and I didn't get past the first point. So I'm going to be here a while, and usually when I put a sermon together, if it's burning in my heart, it's going to be burning in your heart.

That's kind of how I gauge things, and if I'm rushing and I'm like, Lord, there's just too much here, then I'll stop there, and I'll unpack it and not be in a hurry. And the first message is how God directs us, or I'm sorry, how does God direct us? And that's why I prayed that this evening, the prayer that the Holy Spirit would just guide me, because this is a big issue. I'm going to offer counsel on how God is directing us, or going to direct you, and I don't walk into that half-heartedly and nonchalantly.

To me, it's a big deal, because how God directs us is very important. And the book of Jonah is pretty incredible. There's a sermon I put together for this, it was about 12 years ago now, and it came to me that evening.

I was never able to preach on it, that's why I'm going to start this week, but I wrote down direction, disobedience, disclosure, detours, discipline, delays, and divine intervention. The seven D's, and how that affects us in our life as well. So if you have your Bibles, you can turn to the book of Jonah.

If you don't have one, there's one right in front of you, but I won't have time to look through Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, it's towards the back, or towards the middle. Jonah, you get, oh 591, there you go. Page 591, book of Jonah.

And if you don't have a Bible, you can take one of those with you as well, they are free. And you know the story of Jonah, right? Most people do. He was swallowed by a big fish, and of course that's one of the stories everybody mocks, that it's not a Christian.

Oh, that's impossible, and that could never happen, and well, Google it, and you'll see that the possibility is there, and you don't need to trust Google, we trust God's word. But it's not like God, and a guppy swallowed Jonah. You know, it doesn't say that, or a little salmon swallowed Jonah.

I mean, a great fish came up, swallowed him. I mean, whales eat things that are twice our size sometimes, so that's obviously what we think it is, but it just says a great fish. So it's a story that is mocked often, but I look at the Bible as an errand, so I believe that Daniel was in a lion's den, I believe that a great fish swallowed Jonah, I believe in a literal Adam and a literal Eve, I believe in creation, I take the approach that God created in the six days, and on the seventh day he rested, I take a young earth view in looking at the scripture, the inerrancy of scripture, so I take the Bible for what it says.

When it says something, it means it. So this story has a lot of relevance to us. The first chapter and the first verse begins like this, Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amidate, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

I just want to stop there for a minute, because this really impacted me this week, thinking about the grace of God, and the mercy of God, because sometimes we cast God in the wrong light. I mean, we don't generally, but the world does. And God said, Go to Nineveh, this is the capital of Assyria, I hope I'm correct here, I didn't do my background investigation on this, I'm going from years ago, but the capital of Assyria, very wicked nation, they would actually stack the skulls of their enemy up and make pyramids with the skulls of their enemy that they defeated.

Very wicked nation, if you watch the VeggieTales version, it doesn't do it justice, when they're getting slapped with fishes and things, but this was a wicked city, and God called Jonah to go to this city and cry out against it, because the sin, the sin has reached up to my ears, it had gotten to such a level that judgment was going to come. And God will often warn a nation, we see here, He will often warn a people, He will warn a person, He will offer that mercy and that grace, He'll send somebody, He'll send a message, an article, a pastor, a preacher, a friend, a relative, and God in His mercy and in His grace warns us of things that are coming if we don't change course. So the wickedness had come up before the Lord, in verse 3, but Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. And notice how it said that twice there, right at the end, he tried to flee from the presence of the Lord. Have you ever tried to do that? Or just me? If I just go, if God wants me to do something, if I just go to a different city or take a drive, or I'm not going to talk to that person, I'll go flee the presence of the Lord.

You know that's impossible, right? I believe it was David who wrote, where shall I go? How can I flee the presence of the Lord? If I go into heaven, if I ascend into heaven, you are there. Behold, if I make my bed in hell, you are even there. If I take the winds of the morning and go to the uttermost parts of the sea, even

you are there to hold me, to guide me, to strengthen me.

It's a loving Father. So Jonah is trying to flee the presence of the Lord. God says, go and do this, and he says, no, I will not.

Now, here's our thinking sometimes. We think that God is like people. So if I'm just going to say, okay, I'm not going to do that, I'm going to flee the presence of the Lord, I'm not going to listen to that person.

Not listening to God is not like not listening to your boss, or it's not, yeah, it's not the same thing. When God says to do something, he will get the prodigal son there. He will help you get to that journey.

He will bring a big fish, so to speak. He will alter things, and he will get you on the course that he has called you to do. You can go fighting and screaming.

You can encounter the pain of discipline or the pain of regret, like we talked about. But God is a good God, and he will get us back on track. God's not going, well, there goes my plan for that person, and he made his decision, and now there's nothing I can do about it.

And there is an interesting dynamic with our free will and God's sovereignty. I've been studying that topic for 19 years now, Mike, I know you have too, and we talk about it often. We've got a free will, right? We are responsible for our choices.

We can do certain things. But there's something called sovereignty that is a little bit stronger than my will. And God's sovereignty will prevail.

Now how that works, I don't really know. Most people don't know. Charles Spurgeon said, where man's responsibility and God's sovereignty, it runs like two parallel lines.

And we don't know where they cross until eternity. So it's important to live your life that way, realizing that God is sovereign, we trust in him. However, there are consequences, there are ramifications.

We are given a will, a free will, a will to do what we want to do. We can reject or accept his will for our life. Now I don't know exactly how that works.

It's not cookie cutter, right? It's not, or I should say, it's not cut and dry. You know, this is God's will, this is free will, they intermingle. So just know, it's always, I guess I could just say this, it's always best to obey, right? Just God says it, just do it because he will get the final word in.

So direction, that's the first point here. Direction, disobedience, disclosures, detours, discipline, delays, and divine intervention. I was trying to get through that all tonight, but it's only going to be probably here at direction.

We read here that the word of the Lord came to Jonah. The word of the Lord came to Jonah. Now was it audible? Was it a deep impression? Was it a word from someone else? Did he have a parchment of the Old Testament? Right? You just roll it out, they didn't have books back then, you didn't have your Bible app.

And I don't know if he was carrying a parchment that said, thus saith the Lord. So there is something we could get into, hopefully at some point, that God spoke to people differently in different ways. Now as believers, we do have the Holy Spirit, we don't cast lots anymore, thank God, right? It's kind of like flipping

a coin, but they would cast lots.

We will read about that as we keep going in this study and what that meant back then. But we don't exactly know how God spoke to Jonah. And when God speaks to you, I've never heard an audible voice that I'm aware of, but I have had deep impressions where God has Abba, the Holy Spirit is crying Abba Father, and there is a deep impression, especially pastoring.

My wife can tell you, it was like fighting God. I knew it's what He wanted me to do, and I fought it for a while. I'm like, pastors, they just smile all the time, right Joey? Smile, and they're nice.

I want to preach, I don't want to... Just nice and easy going, glasses on, and very just... That's not rugged. I want the rugged pastor, prophet type. So I avoided it, and I was working hard in construction and different things, but finally I told my wife to take a drive, and it took me about three hours to finally submit and say, okay Lord, I'll do what you want me to do.

Now it wasn't ever an audible voice, it wasn't written in the sky, but when the Holy Spirit's in you, and the Holy Spirit wrote the Word of God, when you read the Word of God, it'll come alive in many places. It will minister to your heart. Things will stand out.

God will begin to speak. It's deep calling deep. I don't quite know how it works.

I just know there's a sensing, God wants me to do this. Now there are safeguards there, because we don't just go off by the voices we hear, right? Because there's people in prison right now, because voices told them to do something. So I'm going to get into that a little bit.

How does God speak to us? That's why I'm treading lightly here, because it is an important topic. Now can God speak audibly? Sure. Has he? Probably, maybe to some people.

Does God speak through other people? What about prophetic words? Are they still for today? Or do we just take out that part of Corinthians where Paul said that prophecy is edifying, and to test it, and a gift of wisdom, or a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge. See, and these things that are in the Bible and biblical, for example, Paul says a word of knowledge, or a word of wisdom, and how to conduct it, and how to test it. And we say, oh that was wonderful in the New Testament, but today it's weird.

Well what's weird is people have made it weird. The truth isn't weird. Something like that is when God brings something supernaturally to your mind to share with someone else.

It's God, go and share this with him. He puts it, it's a, I have this word of wisdom, or a word of knowledge that I normally wouldn't know, or you wouldn't know. I don't have that gifting, so I don't operate necessarily in, God hasn't used me too much in that type of area.

Even though when I've prayed with people, I sense certain things, and just hey, I'm impressed by this, to do it. I've never said, Lord told me to tell you, personally, because I'm scared of that one. Because I know what's in here, right? Is it the Lord, or is it shame? But I have come to people and say, listen, this has been on my heart for a while, I want to share this with you, do whatever you want with it.

I feel that God has impressed me, and I think it's important, just take a look at this. And I've been praying with people, and I've asked them, I mean, you would, it's amazing when God brings something to your mind that you normally wouldn't know, and you share it, and the person just breaks down. Or they, I can't

believe that, I just read that today, I've been thinking, oh God.

You know, so, we gotta be careful though, I'm gonna get to that hopefully in a minute. So direction, the word of the Lord came to Jonah. We don't know exactly how, but we know it was the word of the Lord, and Jonah knew that it was the word of the Lord.

So, here's how you test something in order to get direction from God. Here's where I really started to add things in the sermon. I was gonna gloss over this and jump to the next point, but I think it's important.

The first thing, is this the Lord speaking to me? You have to have the motive test, it's what I call the motive test. Why are we doing what we're doing? Right? Okay, the Lord spoke to me, the Lord told me to go do something. Well, I need to check my motives, right? You know, the Lord told me to go spend a thousand dollars in Vegas.

Morgan, I'll be home tomorrow. Right, that's probably not the Lord. It's with some motives there, and so the motive test is important because God often, when he calls you to do something, what I've noticed, we can confirm it with scripture, it's often to go and help others.

Very rarely will God call you to do something that exalts yourself, that is all about selfishness and self-exaltation. Now, granted, when he called me to pastor, and as the church grows, the position itself, you can grow in notoriety, you can grow in popularity, which I don't like those things, really, ask Morgan, but it comes with it, but the motive is to help others. The motive is not selfishness, it's to help others.

Now, we have to fight through our selfishness sometimes and our ulterior motives, and if you bring an ulterior motive to the foot of the cross and you say, Lord, this isn't right, I don't want this in my life, God will honor that. So you see, it's only a temptation, you haven't acted upon it yet, it's just the thought. So the motive test, okay, for example, I believe God is calling me to do something, okay? Well, what's the motive behind it? Is it the pocketbook? Now, sometimes finances will be blessed, is it self-exaltation, is it different things? So the main thing, is it going to help others, is it humbling yourself, or are you going to restore something that you've broken, or repair a damaged relationship, or, I mean, I could think of so many examples.

Shane, I don't know if this job is for me. I don't know, is God calling me to do it? Is God calling me to do it? I mean, I'm going to make 60,000 more a year. That's a pretty big motive, right? See, but that can't be the driving force, that can be an extra bonus, but that, so you have to put God's, what you feel is God's direction through the motive test.

Why am I doing what I'm doing? And I've also noticed that direction often aligns with passion and calling. So Jonah was a prophet, so God was going to call him to go prophesy, speak boldly to the nation of Nineveh, and call them to repentance. It lined up with his calling.

So if you're feeling something in your heart, I just thought of these examples yesterday. For example, if you're a woman's leader, and you see women coming to your home, and coming to your house, and your house being filled with women, and mentoring the women, the motive for some might be self-exaltation, and look at this big Bible study, and look at the, but somebody else, it could be, Lord, for your glory. You've put this on my heart.

I want to help women in this area, so you have to sift through emotions. What about another person says, I see a solid Bible study group developing, and I see myself developing curriculum. Lord, is that of you?

Well, what's the motive? Do you want to get your name on the back of a business card, and get your name on the back of a book, and get curriculum published, so you can finally show your mom that you've arrived? You know, it's motives, motives, but if it's truly to help people.

I've shared this before. I've read a lot of biographies from missionaries on the mission field, Adonijah Jetson, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, when they went out to the mission field, and they've had this desire to go beyond foreign soil. I have this desire to go and do that.

Well, I know some missionaries, thank God I'm not here, but they like the mission trips, because they can stay at five-star hotels and travel. So what's the motive, right? I'm not going to get into it, but I heard about one about ten years ago. It was like, you're sipping on champagne and eating caviar, and going to bed in this five-star hotel in the swimming pool and jacuzzi, and you're on a mission trip.

I think you're on vacation. Let's get this straight here, okay? Now, if God blesses somebody wonderful and their heart's right, that's why I said it's all about motives. I've read in Billy Graham's books before, and I've had a dream about this.

I've shared before, many years ago, I think it was still, it was probably 2001, where I've dreamed, and there's just a sea of people. And I'm speaking to just a sea of people, and I wake up, and, Lord, what's that about? Well, he began to show me that's what he's calling me to do. Is this C300, 3000? I have no idea.

But see, it aligns with my passion and my calling. So there is a desire sometimes to have, love to have a large church, worshiping God. But if the motives are right, there's nothing wrong with that, because wouldn't you want 1,000 people worshiping God together? I mean, verses 10, and we're barely making it.

And I mean, well, brother, but at least our motives are pure. You know, the frozen chosen. But it's, see, you can have dreams and aspirations and goals as long as the motives are good and God-honoring.

Now, you will struggle with pride from time to time. You will struggle from, gosh, aren't we doing great? And I mean, I run into people throughout, they're like, I can't believe what Westside's doing in Leona Valley. I mean, people are talking about, I'm like, I know, I can't either.

And sometimes you're, right, like, yeah, look what we've accomplished, right. But we know, right, Paul? We know who, I mean, God is, it doesn't happen without his touch, without his anointing, without his calling. So you just get your motions back in check, and you humble yourself, and God is honored.

But you have to have the motive test, because I see a lot of people doing things for the wrong reasons. One example is I do, me writing books is probably one of the most funniest things I've ever, ever heard of in my life, because it's hard to speak, hard to write sometimes, and my grammar skills are not good. I still misspell words and things.

So thank God for my mom editing, but I know God put that in my heart, to do that, to get the books out and help people. And people, now they'll send manuscripts for endorsements, or can you read my manuscript? Can you help me with this book? And young authors or different things. I say, listen, what you need to do is you need to go to spend time with God and say, even if I have to pass these out for free, this message is burning in my heart, I want to help people.

Then you're ready to write your book. But if you think you're going to be the next bestseller and retire and make money, then you're probably not going in the right direction. The mode is, why are you doing what

you're doing? And is God really going to be honored? And I got an email from Amazon or Kindle, I think, a couple years ago.

I put one of the Desperate for More of God on cheap, like \$6. And they're like, well, this should be \$16 or \$14. I'm like, no, \$6.

I don't, and then they send me a dollar or whatever. I mean, people think you make a lot of money, right? I mean, we've given out thousands and thousands and thousands of books. Well, probably not, maybe 15, 12,000 books over the years.

And it's not a money, it's to give back. Now, if you can make a little pay for printing, that's wonderful. I mean, that's okay.

But Kindle even said come up and so but we want to price it to where it's affordable for people. So that's my whole point. Do I do I walk this line perfectly? No, we all struggle.

But I'm trying to get the point across that God will deal with you in motive. So when he's testing you, sometimes you're going the right direction, but he's testing your motives. Once you realize, you know what, I might have the wrong motive here, you'll still keep going down the right path.

But what's the motive? Why do we do what we do? Number two, the biblical test. This one we ignore sometimes, right? What does the Bible say? Well, Shane, I just don't feel led to do something. Well, if it's in the Bible, you might not feel led to do it, but you just do it.

Why? You know, I've never really felt led to give. I've really never felt led to help. And I've never really felt led to fast.

I mean, I don't, I don't fast. I don't do any of those things. I don't really feel led.

Well, Matthew six says, when you give, when you what are we just second message, right? When you pray, well, I don't feel led to pray. And when you fast, when, so is it, is it, is it biblical? Is it the biblical test? Because people, and I hear that a lot, and I've said it a lot. I've been guilty of it.

I'll just, I'll admit it Wednesday nights, Sunday night, Sunday morning, I might not admit this, but Wednesday I will admit it that I, you know, I just don't feel led. I just don't feel led, but it's in the Bible. And my wife will point it out, but it's in the Bible.

Right? So when it comes to following direction from God, make sure it's, it's, you may not feel led. Take the biblical test. Is it, is it biblical? Is it wise? I've thrown out this example before, but it might fit tonight.

We've, we've talked to people you have who are young and, and they start dating, right? And they're on fire for God, but this person's not even a believer. Gosh, Shane, I don't know what to do. And they'll call.

I don't know what to do. What should I do? Well, let's read what Paul said. Well, I know what the Bible says, but I mean, what does God want me to do? You know, it's, well, I don't know what to tell you.

That's, that's what it says to do. So a lot of decisions, financial, I, I'm encouraging people, I use, do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. I even take that as, personally, I take that into business as well.

I don't think a Christian businessman should get involved with a Christian, a man who's not a Christian. You're gonna have a lot of problems with that. That's unequally yoked, meaning what, what fellowship has light with darkness and goodness with lawlessness? It's not going to match.

And so you can avoid a lot of things. People, many people move. Let's just say, for example, I've talked about that before, move or because of a better job, a better career.

Shane, I'm gonna make \$10,000 more dollars a year. Okay, well, if your family's gonna suffer, you're moving away from friends and family, from a church where you're growing, is it really biblical? What's, what's the Bible say? The love of money, not money. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

So if you sift it through the Bible, you can rest, rest assure you are going in a healthy direction. Then the third test, the Holy Spirit test. This is critical.

Is there peace? Is there assurance? Because if you ever went against God, you know what that feels like? It feels like walking on sandpaper, okay, and rubbing your feet like this. It's just not feeling good. All right, Lord, I'm doing this.

I know, but I, and I just don't have peace. I don't have assurance. I know I shouldn't be doing this.

I'll just give you a few examples. We were, before we came to this location a couple years ago, well, there's been a few churches I've, I've considered and we've talked about merging together. You know, bringing the churches together.

We didn't have a building. They weren't, they needed more people and kind of merging things. But in each case, it just, it felt like sandpaper.

It felt like, okay, I'll, I'll get through this and see where God's at. But knowing it probably wasn't of God because there wasn't peace. There wasn't assurance.

It didn't fit. It was just, it was just too much. I remember one church, the pastor who was going to be leaving said, well, you know, if you come over here, you know, and we merge, you're not going to be able to keep doing Saturday night services because you know, we need to have the people all fellowshiping together on Sunday morning together.

And I'm thinking, well, you're leaving the church and you're going to tell us how to run the church. I don't understand here, but it got more authoritative, more pushy. It just didn't feel right.

And things, and so the Holy Spirit is, is, is the author of peace, not confusion. Now, when you're following God, I wish I could tell you it's a bed of roses and peace every day, but there's a difference knowing, okay, Lord, I'm doing your will and I'm having a struggle, but I'm still in your will. I'm doing this versus having this tremendous anxiety.

There's no peace. You know, you're fighting, you're hitting against grasping against or grabbing for the wind and things just aren't fitting. So the Holy Spirit test is important.

So you check your motives. Is it biblical? Is there peace? Is there assurance? Do I, do I feel good about this? Have you ever said that and thought about something? Yeah, I just, I feel good about this. I, I, I, I'm stepping out in faith.

I think God is leading me to do this. And then the fourth test, that Jonah wasn't able to do a lot of these tests. So we're, we're, we're, we have the advantage on him.

The godly counsel test. Oh my. The godly counsel test.

There is safety in godly counsel. I can't think of one time that I went against it. I can't, but it's, it's not always bulletproof.

In other words, what you're, if you're about ready to make a decision and you go to godly counsel, right? Spirit filled men and women who will shoot you straight, not yes men or yes women, who, cause you know, you can go to some people to tell you what you want to hear, right? I can pick them out right now. I could, oh yeah, whatever you want to do. Hey, I'm thinking of moving and selling the church and getting a different career, whatever you want to do, Shane, that sounds great.

We're, you know, I'm not thinking of that. Don't worry. I'm just, but you know, those people, but if you go to true godly counselors, you lay it out and they will help to direct things.

I've given this, given this example before, but it's a new audience now. So hopefully you, or you won't remember it, but a couple of years ago, I had a great idea. I thought too, and I had all the postcards made up.

I think they're still at my house and I was going to mail out 10,000 postcards. Well, what started this is, is in my neighborhood, I see different groups, let's just say knocking on the door of homes. So I was going to send out 10,000 postcards to show what Jehovah Witness and Mormons believe and compare it to the Bible.

And it was, you know, probably wasn't gonna be well received very good. And the elder said, I don't think that's a good idea. Nobody agreed with it.

So I'm like, you know what? That's probably not a good idea right now. Let's, let's not do that. And other times where I've wanted to, let's say, have an event at the church, um, or do something with the church and, and elders or different people say, I don't, I don't think that's a good idea.

I'm not feeling that. Okay. That's not, I gotcha.

I mean, if you're not feeling it and nobody's agreeing, you know, so, and, but looking back, it was never a bad decision because sometimes you're just right. Bulletproof emotions are high. You know what you want to do, but others can sit back and take a look and say, Hey, uh, you might want to reconsider this.

There's, I don't have peace about this. Now, this isn't a foolproof plan, right? You'll go against, uh, cause, uh, I had, when I got into pastoring and gave up the other career, people would tell me that's ridiculous. Why, why would you ever, you're, you're set to be one of the top real estate agents in the Valley and you're going to, why are you, you're making, why would you do that? It doesn't make any sense, but that's not godly counsel, right? That's, that's people sharing their opinions, but when you go to godly, mature men and women and you paint the correct picture, that's important because sometimes we'll, we'll show them our version, but leave out the, the, the other things.

Well, you didn't tell me it cost you 5,000. Why forgot about that? You didn't tell me your wife's not for this plan. Why I forgot about that too.

And we paint this picture of what we want the godly counsel to think until we get a different, uh, answer. So always be up front, let them know if you're wanting to do something, plan something, uh, step out in faith, sometimes it's good to run it by godly counsel to see what they say. The Bible actually says, I wish I wrote down the scripture that in the multitude of counsel, there is safety, meaning there's, there's safety there.

You're not just going out on your own. And a good reminder, an open door isn't always the right door. And I've had to be tested on this before.

Many times I've got an open door. Um, and I don't know if it's the right door sometimes and godly counsel will help to steer you in that direction. And then number five, I like as well the wisdom test.

Cause we're, we're still back on that first part, part. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah. How do I know something changed the word of the Lord? Well, the wisdom test.

Now this is a little bit different than the Bible test because in the Bible, it's in the Bible, but wisdom is, is it wise? Uh, and I don't mean does it, it doesn't make sense financially, but is it wise? Proverbs says the wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore get wisdom and all you're getting, getting, get understanding. She will exalt you.

She will promote you. So before making a decision, there's nothing wrong. I do it all the time.

I wait on God. Say, Lord, is this wise? Is this, is this what a wise man or woman would do? Is this, is it, or is it throwing caution to the wind? And I can find it. I mean, you can find a verse to support anything, right? The alcoholic finds Timothy, the verse to Timothy that take a little wine for your stomach.

The person who doesn't want to be judged in their sin will throw out, don't judge at you. And you can find things. So you have to line it up with wisdom.

And then the waiting test, those who wait, not rush on the Lord will renew their strength. Waiting, waiting, waiting, right? And if anything is pushing you and you don't feel comfortable, be careful because the enemy works in this area of rushing and confusing and push, push, push, push, hurry, hurry, right? And I'm, I've been gullible in the past. You go into car salesman or any type of salesman and I ended up buying stuff.

I never, fitness equipment, man, they had me, I, I just wanted to get some barbells and now I've got a whole thing and you know, and so you're pushed into things. But waiting is biblical. Now we all know there are times to make a quick decision, right? You know, you, sometimes you have to make a quick decision.

Uh, your child's choking. You know, let me wait and see what God's doing here. Is he testing me? And so you, you, there are times to make quick decisions.

You have to, but more often than not, I would say 90% of the time you can wait. And it's often when you wait, you get clarity, you get direction, but Shane, I might lose this job. Well, if you don't have peace and it's a major decision and you lose a job, God is not in heaven scratching his head going, Oh, why did he wait on me? Now I'm not, I've lost it.

I'm not, I have no control now. I don't know what this person's going to do. He's ruined his whole life.

God doesn't like, he's not like that. Waiting, there's strength in waiting because waiting prepares you. As I'm waiting, I'm seeking God.

As I'm waiting, my faith is increasing. As I'm waiting, I'm actually growing more confident, right? But when we're rushed into something, often it doesn't work well. I remember one time, 2005, oh no, 2003, on the corner of 47th Street West and about J. We went to buy a house, our first house together, right? I could not believe where prices were in 2003.

It was like I was depressed to buy a house. So I went in there, talked to the lady and she goes, you know, what's your lucky day? And really I knew because I was in construction, so I saw that they had just cut the foundation, trenched the foundation and they were going to be pouring the foundations that week, I could tell by just looking at it. She goes, this is the last house in this phase.

This is the last house in this phase. If you don't get it, you come back next week, we're going to be in the other phase and the houses are going up \$15,000. You got to do it now.

I'll be here until five. Let's do it right. You know all the closing techniques, right? The closing Zig Ziglar and Tony or Anthony, whatever his name is, and the closing techniques.

Come on, you know you want this. Why are you here? No time is better than the present. Your wife's ready.

Are you ready? She put your wife on the spot. I think so. I think I want a house.

And they use that closing technique on you to close. I was a closer. I trained salesmen, so I know what their technique is.

Salespeople don't like me for that very reason because I can read between the lines. So I said, well, thank you, but we'll be back next week. I just, I'm not going to rush it.

Well, okay. Have it your way. Kind of smirked, right? So a week went by.

It was a Sunday, I think. A week later, I go in there and she's smiling. Oh, \$15,000 more.

I told you that house is gone. We're going to the next phase. I said, okay, well, I just want to check in.

She goes, well, you know what? It probably won't work, but the old phase, house just fell out of escrow, but it's moving ready like right now. Like, well, we can move in like this week. Oh, okay.

And it's \$15,000 less. So now we're \$30,000, right? \$15,000 less than the one you wanted because it's the old prices, the old phase. And it's a four bedroom, not a three.

So you have \$15,000 more in equity right then. Ready to move in. So obviously we moved in that week, but you see how God just waiting from the outside, it looked, oh, we lost our house and the market's going up.

You couldn't find anything. It was going up and going up and going up, but just waiting and waiting. There's nothing wrong in that.

God will honor that. Now I know it's hard, right? I don't remember if we got an argument or not because, oh, you should have bought it. I don't know if we bought it, but God will honor waiting on the Lord because

often what he has planned is a lot better than what we think is planned.

And when we wait on him and wait for his perfect will, and when you pray this prayer, Lord, I don't know what to do, but I'm going to wait on you and I'm going to trust you. That's powerful. God is going, I can work in that.

I can use that type of attitude. And then God directs because now you're waiting. I've seen people, there are stories of just even like going to college or switching careers and Lord, I don't know to leave this career and they just stay in it and within a month their boss gets fired or is leaving.

And then now who's next in line to take this job that they were going to leave because they weren't making enough and they didn't have to ask for it. The person went to them, would you take this position? Oh, consider it. Let me think about it.

But see, that's what you do when you wait on your God because God is in the waiting so he can do things. The devil's in the rushing and the confusion. Do you ever make decisions feeling rushed and confused? Right? You're rushed.

Oh, I should tell this story. I should have told it Sunday. Morgan reminded me on fasting and health and different things, but it's kind of a hard one.

But my four-year-old was having a hard time breathing at night. I was like, is she going to stop breathing? I would wake up, my wife would wake up at one in the morning and what's going on here? So we took her to a doctor this recently, I think December. I remember November, December.

And the doctor's like looking at the chart and he's like, from one to 10, she's like way up here. You're going to need to schedule surgery to have her adenoids moved and her tonsils moved. I would do it now.

I've got a guy down in LA, here's the number. Adenoids and tonsils, those are very good for the immune system for little kids. I mean, I've had mine out, so I know many of you have too, but I said, well, thank you.

I'm not going to rush into that. And we went home, we prayed. Boy, did we pray and maybe fasted.

You know, Lord, you've got to do something. I don't know what to do. I'm not going to put in your child down to have those removed and different things.

Come to find out though, I mean, God heals in different things, but what we did is we just took out everything. We restructured her diet because she was not doing too much sugar, too much dairy, too much all this. So we just completely cleaned it up, gave her the foods that heal the body.

And within a week she's breathing fine. The tonsils are a little big, but all the inflammation's gone. There's just breathing, goes to sleep well.

No problems at all with a week later. But I was in that rushing, confusing, and you get a little snappy with your spouse, right? You know, when they're both wanting the best. And what do we do? I don't know what to do.

I have no clue what to do. That doctor just told me really bad news. I'm really mad right now.

I'm not going to drive her down to surgery. And of course you have other people like, oh, you better act on that. And then other people, no, just relax.

And Craig Jennifer was a good help that week. I mean, just settle down. You know, God will show you.

But had we rushed in that decision, you know, and it was hard because I even got to a point, well, Lord, as we're waiting on you, I mean, if you take her, I mean, I just, I can't deal with that. Lord, I just need to hear. And it was a hard, very hard season.

So I know that rushing and that confusion got me angry too. It got me irritable and making foolish decisions. And so just stepping back, waiting on God, the waiting test.

And then finally the prayer test. Have you been praying? This one shocks me. I talk to people, you know, well, have you prayed about it? Well, I mean, a little bit, you know, last week, I think I, did I pray? Yeah, I prayed about it.

When it's on decisions and you want to know if God is moving, it's a prayer focus throughout the day. It's, you are, Lord, show me, I'm open, teach me, I'm praying for this because you're communicating with your father. If he's directing you, you want to hear, you want to tune in the radio to the right source.

So you want to hear from him. Now, I talked about this earlier, a word about words, prophetic words. First Thessalonians 5, 20, 21 says, do not despise prophecies, test all things, hold fast what is good.

Now this word prophecies could mean kind of what I do on Sundays, which is preaching God's word boldly. And it's a prophetic type of ministry. It's not foretelling, it's foretelling, it's preaching.

But this could also mean somebody speaking something like, hey, God has put this on my heart. Have you ever had people say that to you? You know, God has put this on my heart and I want to share this with you. And this, I still believe that God does this, but these types of things don't lead your decisions, but they can confirm it, reinforce it, and it can also convict you in certain areas.

So if somebody tells me something, I'm not, hey Shane, I believe that God's put on my heart that you're supposed to move everything to Mojave and close down this church and let everybody know. Oh, thank you, I'll do that this week. Thank you for the word of the Lord that goes against every other principle that is on here, right? Goes against everything.

So those are more for confirmation. I wish I had time to break it down. It's, there are churches where you go into and it's every week, it's, Lord told me, it's like you become a basket case.

I can't concentrate. I mean, I don't need a word from the Lord every single week. He's pretty clear on what to do in His word.

I just need Him for major decisions sometimes. I need to, what it really is to me, it's confirmation. It's confirmation.

Lord, are you doing something here? I want you to confirm it with me. And here's how I look at words like this that people say, I just want to share something with you, it's been in my heart. It's like when my daughter's up on the wall, maybe six feet tall, and I'm saying, come on, jump to me, or I'm just holding up my hands, holding out my hands.

She sees my hands. But when I say, jump, I have you, I will catch you, she jumps. So I see the word of God as the arms.

You see, you see what the Bible says. But until the Father speaks to you and confirms His will, it's okay, son, go in this direction, I'm with you. That adds extra weight.

So there are people who say, God doesn't speak like that today. We have the Bible, and that's good enough. And I see what they're saying.

But the Bible didn't tell me to plant a church. It doesn't say anywhere. The Bible didn't say such and such.

There's principles that guide you into all truth. But sometimes, somebody will come alongside and confirm what God has already put on your spirit or to help, especially if it's out of the blue. You know, it's been in my heart all week.

I don't even know what this is about. I've been praying for you. But God says, I just feel that if there's something in, if you're whole, and I don't even know how to word it, because I haven't done this before, as far as legitimately giving somebody that type of word of knowledge or word of wisdom, but I've had it, I've received, I've heard it.

And they just tell you something that you wouldn't, they wouldn't know otherwise, that you're holding on to something and you need to let this go. I don't know if it's bitterness or unforgiveness, but that is crushing you and hurting you. And the person's like, oh my goodness, that's exactly what I've been praying for.

And so it confirms, because we're weak vessels, right? We need confirmation sometimes. I'm not afraid to say, God, I need confirmation before I move. As a matter of fact, I do that more often than not.

Lord, I need you to confirm. I need you to show me something in this area. And I'm going to give you a quick example from the church right now.

I asked this lady for permission. This is a perfect example. She has, she's got the opportunity to go and work with young women.

I believe there's some type of young women's shelter and battered women or out of the sex slave trade. They've approached her, they've asked her to do this, but she has a very good job somewhere. Very good job.

So Shane, or what do you think? What am I supposed to do with that? Well, the test, wisdom. Did God tell you something or did someone else tell you something? In other words, just because somebody approaches you doesn't mean it's God's will. However, sometimes God will use people to initiate something.

I don't think I would have thought about pastoring as much as I had, had not about a half dozen people, Yvette, you're one of them, come to me in 2009 and say, have you ever thought about pastoring? Have you ever thought about pastoring? I got a call from a friend in Hawaii. Have you ever thought about pastoring? From my cousin or aunt. Have you ever thought about pastoring? What's wrong with people this week? No, I haven't.

Stop, leave me alone. So see that little bit of the nudge from others. I remember one guy actually heard me speak at Central Christian at a men's breakfast and it was 2003, Saturday morning and he came up

and he said, you're going to pastor.

I just, no, I don't think so. I'll speak at different places, but I'm not going to do that. He goes, you are.

And he reminded me of that before he moved a couple of years ago. But so sometimes people will help to initiate what God is wanting to do. It's like the stubborn donkey, right? I need a little kick in the leg.

So did God tell you to do something or did the other person tell you to do it? And you look at, I look at the character of the person offering this opportunity. So I, part of wisdom would be, I would do my research. I would find out what this organization is about.

Who are these people? Have friends or family member meet these people? Look into their, are your financial statements available? No. Well, if you're a 501c3, they are available. So let's see what, let's see how you manage your, let's see, can I talk to some people? You use wisdom, a real estate term is you do your due diligence.

You use wisdom. You look into things and then wait. It's when we are rushed, perplexed and confused that we rush ahead.

So that if, if, if, if this group is saying, hey, I need an answer tomorrow, sorry, I don't, I don't work like that. Now, of course, God can do whatever we want. There's, there's exceptions to every rule, right? God sometimes is, like Jesus said, oh Matthew, the fish, the fishermen, come on, you're following men.

No, I'm just going to wait, Jesus. I'm going to wait for a while. I heard Shane's sermon, I'm waiting and I'm going to, I'm going to give it some time.

Jesus said, nope, now follow me. Can I go back and bury my family, bury my dead? Talk, no. A man who lays his hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

So there are times, I believe, sometimes where it's time to make a decision, but more often than not, God wants us to wait and not be rushed. And often, here's what I've noticed, as you wait, the, the, the deal gets sweeter. You get more, more, you look into it more.

You have more faith. You can see where God is moving. What was confusing now makes sense.

What about my income? Oh, now I see how that's going to work. God, if you have two or three homes you can sell and you make in this market right now, the market's at a high and you don't owe much, you can put five, six hundred thousand into savings to have that grow for you. Oh, I see how God's going to, so you, you wait on God and you see how he's going to, I wish I had that kind of money to put in savings.

That's what we're thinking. But there are people out there, they have, you know, they can do this and God will often give them something to use it later. Right? He blesses to you.

I remember construction, when we were so busy, I was saving and saving and saving and saving. That's all we did. Not very many vacations, saving and saving.

And then guess what we used that savings for when the market went nosedive? Because God used that abundance to supply a lack later. So also, I recommend to this person, pray, pray a lot. God, I need to know if this is from you.

I'm going to stay, pray, and obey. You cannot go wrong saying God, I need to know if this is from you. God's not schizophrenic, right? He's not trying to make our lives difficult.

He will show us. And God may use others to prompt us in the right direction. So motives, what would be her motive? Well, based on this, it looks like the motives are good to help the young women.

Is it biblical? Yeah. Yeah. Very biblical.

Council, what do others say? Well, look at what others are saying. And then finances. The reason I mentioned finances is this is the biggie.

Here's, let's just be honest, let's cut to the chase. We often look at things from a financial perspective. But from my experience, God doesn't.

Do you know, I would have never left, many of you know the story, I hate to be repetitive, but I was at 24 Hour Fitness. I worked my way up the ladder, corporate ladder, business suit and tie. I was at board meetings in Anaheim and nice places and I had \$300,000 budget every month.

And I had 150 employees and I ran payroll profit loss statements and board budgets. And so I know about corporate budgets and you have to hit your goals and same store growth. And I had to get my same store growth over 10, 12% each year.

And it was difficult, especially when I came back to the Lord, none of these things mattered anymore. But I wasn't going to leave because of finances. Lord, I'm making six figures.

I have a custom house in my 20s. I'm not leaving. I can't leave this.

Well, yeah, you can just move back in with your mom. Oh, no. Right.

But we make decisions. Based on finances, God isn't concerned about the finances. Now, disclaimer, right? Wisdom doesn't just say we just jump ship and, oh, let's just do whatever and see if God will bless it.

No, we don't do something and see if God will bless it. We first make sure that God is in it and then he will bless it. If it's his will, it's his bill.

Where God guides, he provides, right? All those little catchy things. But that's true. So I've seen so many people make decisions from a financial perspective.

It was funny. One of the things before we came up here, the number one question, and rightly so, people would ask is, well, where's that church at financially? Are they buried? You know, you're going up there, you're taking on this great debt. Randy, you know, huh? We talk and people are out.

I'm like, I don't know that part yet. I'm just trying to seek if this is God's will. I mean, once I find out if this is God's will and seeking, those things will be added.

But well, we have to know where they are financially. Well, that's, I want to first know, is God even doing this? If God's not doing this, I don't want to see financial records. I don't care about financial records.

I just want to know, God, are you in this? Are you in this? And then part of wisdom, right, is we started to see and started to do things. And I can share this with you because I've said it before. There was only about \$85,000 owed on this entire property.

And so our payment would drop from \$3,000 to \$1,200 a month once we moved up here. So you can see how God's putting the pieces together, wisdom, and using people to confirm different things. But most people would not be in ministry if financial comfort had the final say.

The reason I'm talking about finances is because most people are limited or they don't want to do what God wants them to do because they are worried about finances. And I don't know exactly what that looks like. I'd have to write a book on it, I guess, because you are supposed to use wisdom, right? We're not supposed to get into financial disaster.

We're supposed to be good stewards of God's money. He actually spoke more about money and stewardship than any other topic. Jesus did.

So there is wisdom there. But when it comes out to stepping out in God's will, don't let the finances have the final say. Let God have the final say.

And when you say, Lord, I don't know where you're going to provide. I'm going to trust you. That's how George Mueller provided housing for over 10,000 orphans.

He didn't say, well, Lord, if you're calling me, and he just began to spiral upward, not downward, in a good way. If we only did God's will when it made sense financially, we would rarely do his will. I remember D. Martin Lloyd-Jones.

Many of you have wonderful commentaries. He was going to be a doctor, but he was called to the pastorate. I just mentioned George Mueller.

I can mention a dozen other names. Often, and I've actually seen this too, when it comes to doing God's will, it's often not a pay raise. And that's why I mentioned the books.

Don't go into writing a book thinking you're going to be the next bestseller and make a lot of money. You go into helping people. So same thing in hearing God's voice.

Often it will not be a pay raise. God will test you in that area. And the mistake is that many people look at ministry like a job, listening to God.

Okay, if I listen to God, I'll make good money. Maybe it's going to be some type of scheme, or maybe it'll be a good scheme, right? And we get into things thinking it's going to be a money-making scheme, and it's not. So here's a closing verse.

Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare and went down into it, and he went to Tarshish again to flee from the presence of the Lord. So I would just ask tonight, as we close, to evaluate these areas.

Is there anything going on in my motives? Are we making decisions where our motives are wrong? Are we going against the Bible? Are we going against peace and assurance? Are we lacking godly counsel? Is there an area of something that you're thinking is God's will, and have you not even consider what godly counsel says? And this is hard, too. Isn't it humbling? Because I have an idea. I believe God's calling me to do this.

I'm going to do it. I don't need to seek godly counsel. I don't need to see what others think.

That's pride, though. That's what pride wants to do. So if this is an area that you need help in, I would encourage you to pray this evening for that.

Wisdom. Are you using wisdom and waiting? Are you waiting on God in the prayer test? Are you praying? Are you praying for direction?

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