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Series: A.K.A.
1 Samuel 3:1-10

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“Guide”
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Let's pray for a moment. Heavenly Father, thank You for how You guide us as a church. We're aware right now every individual needs Your guidance. So, would You speak to us right now through Your Scriptures...through this time? We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Some of you know I took my wife fly fishing for our 25th anniversary last year. She was thrilled about that. I know nothing about fishing. Unless the fish jumped into the boat and voluntarily sacrificed themselves, I'd be relatively useless. My wife kind of grew up fishing. So the wisest piece of advice we got was...*Don't try doing fly fishing on your own; you need a guide.* And we got one.

Our guide was amazing. He knew every inch of every river we went on. He knew when we should go. He knew where we should go. He knew how to tie the fly. He knew where we ought to cast it. He knew right when we ought to pull on the line. He was amazingly patient. We would get all excited and start casting all over, and the hooks and lines would get tied up into tiny knots. Those of who you have been fly fishing...you know about that. He would untie them and untangle them and get us started once again.

The best part is we actually caught fish. Nancy wanted to have a contest to see between her and me to see who would catch the most fish. I won't tell you how that came out, except to say it was *me!* But I was thinking afterwards, *Wouldn't it be great if you could get a guide for other parts of your life besides just fishing, besides just nature?* Like if you're dating, wouldn't it be great if you could get a guide to just walk you through the dating process? "No, not there. Not that one! Date over here. Date this one!"

Or if you get in an argument with your spouse, wouldn't that be a wonderful gift to have a guide with you? Just when you're about to tell them how much they're like their mother, have a guide say, "No, no, don't go there. Go over here." Decisions we make all the time, but they are so key. Bad ones are so damaging. Wouldn't it be great if we had a reliable expert who could be our guide through all the twists and turns? You make a bad decision, and it makes such a mess. If there was a guide...

The Bible says there is. We're learning in this series about our great God. Now the writers of Scripture have these remarkable ideas, names, pictures of Him. He is a Redeemer. He is the Creator of everything. He is a Father. He is a Judge who brings justice. He is a Comforter. But now this weekend, we think about this. God is a Guide. From the very beginning when He was going to form a people, He came to Abraham...Abram he was known then. The text says, *"The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people, and your father's household, and go to the land I will show you.'"* God guided Abraham.

Then when it's time for Israel to leave Egypt, we're told that the Lord would go before them as a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. This was a physical picture of a spiritual promise. In the book of Proverbs, the writer says, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths."*

Most famous psalm talks about this. Psalm 23, *"The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul."* He knows just what I need. Our God is a Guide. He doesn't leave people on their own. James puts it like this. First chapter of James, *"Whoever among you lacks wisdom..."* Anybody here ever make a bad decision? You ever needed any wisdom? Anybody need any right now? *"Whoever among you lacks wisdom, ask God (just ask God) who gives generously to all without finding fault."*

Our God is a guiding God. But here's what I think. I think of all the facets of the greatness of God we're learning about in this series, this one...the guidance of God...is the one I think is most confusing to people in terms of how do we actually experience it? A lot of you know about this. There will be some people who use the language of divine guidance quite easily. "The Lord told me to do this. God spoke to me about going here. God put this burden on my heart. God showed me this." Then there are other people who *love* God deeply, who follow God, who learn about God, who honestly simply never find themselves having that experience. They wonder, *Am I doing something wrong? Is there some secret I don't know? Am I off-base, or are other people just making stuff up? Are they using language, you know, a little glibly.*

Some denominations and traditions use that language of guidance all the time. Other ones very seriously devoted to God never use that language at all. So that's what we're going to talk about in this message. I want to start by going back to a story in the Old Testament. It's a wonderful little story about a little boy named Samuel because it helps us understand what needs to be learned. *"The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days, the word of the Lord was rare..."* Very interesting phrase. The text doesn't explain why it is that in some areas it might be different than others. A lot of this is, you know, He is a sovereignly wise God. *"In those days, the word of the Lord was rare."*

"Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, 'Here I am.' And he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.' But Eli said, 'I did not call; go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. Again the Lord called, 'Samuel.' And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.' 'My son,' Eli said, 'I did not call; go back and lie down.' Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up, and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.' Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if He calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.'"

And that little boy, Samuel, did. This is the beginning of his relationship with God. Here is what I want to point out right now. God was speaking to Samuel in this story. Samuel knew he was being addressed. He did not know it was God. He actually had to learn how to recognize God was speaking to him. In other words, it's possible for God to speak to someone and for that person to know something is going on, but they don't know it's God. Let's apply this to you and me for a minute. What does it mean to communicate with someone? This is a very important subject. Quite a miraculous thing we're able to do. We just take it for granted. Persons can communicate. It's essential to community, to communing, communication.

Well, communication is simply guiding somebody else's thoughts. Dallas Willard writes about this. By the way, the best book I know about guidance...God's will for your life...is a little book by Dallas called *Hearing God*. That's the title...*Hearing God*. Communication is just guiding somebody else's thoughts. When someone is communicating with you, all they're doing is they're causing you to think certain thoughts you would not otherwise be thinking. Those thoughts are going on in your head. They're your thoughts, but somebody else is prompting them. That's communication.

Now because we're finite creatures, we have to use finite means to guide each other's thoughts. So we make sounds. I'm doing that right now, and because you're sitting here for this talk, you are having thoughts you would not otherwise be having, right? Thoughts like, *When will this be over?* We make sounds, or we write symbols down on paper. Then when people look at that, those symbols...it's amazing how this happens...they prompt thoughts in us. That is what it means to read.

Now because we're finite creatures, we have to use finite means to guide each other's thoughts. But God is infinite, and among other things, this means God can guide your thoughts directly. He doesn't have to use sounds. He doesn't have to use symbols. He can; He doesn't have to. He has direct access to your mind. He can simply guide a thought without using any other means at all.

But now part of what this means is it's possible for God to guide a thought in my mind, but I may not know it's God doing that. Something like this is what happened to little Samuel. He didn't know. Eli helped him with this. This is what might be called the ministry of Eli...helping someone to discern when God may be speaking or guiding in their life.

Prayer is not just me talking with God. If God wants to, God can also talk back. To commune, to be in community, involves communication. Jesus says about His people, "**When He** (the Good Shepherd) **has brought out all His own, He goes on ahead of them, and His sheep follow Him** (this is a picture of guidance) **because they know His voice.**" To have a personal relationship with God means I must be open to the possibility that the Spirit of God is prompting me, guiding me.

For example, one night Nancy was sleeping, and I was looking at her. It was in the middle of the night I woke up. I was just overwhelmed by how much I love this person. I was looking at her face while she was asleep. It's kind of like, you know how when kids are sleeping, you can look at them, and in the peacefulness of their sleep, you're just filled with love, and you can't even imagine how you could ever be mad at them. When they're awake, you can imagine. But when they're sleeping, you just get this...in that unguarded moment...that heart of love. I was having that experience just looking at the face of the person I'm married to. Then the thought that came next was, *John, that sense you have of being filled with love for Nancy is a tiny echo of what is in My heart. I look at you while you're sleeping, and My heart for you is a heart of love.* It was just such an amazing thing to think God could love me like that.

Now, can I prove that was the voice of God? No. None of us is infallible about this. But it's in line with what the Scriptures say. "God is love." Paul says...this is Romans 8:16..."**The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.**" This really means something. It happened for Paul.

Last week I was going for a run on a beach, and I was talking with God. I had been kind of discouraged about some things, and I was asking for encouragement. This was before six o'clock in the morning, so there was *nobody* on the beach. I was running on it, and then coming towards me I saw one other guy. This big, old guy...bald as he could be, just swimming trunks on, long white beard...looked like Santa Claus on summer vacation. He is walking on the beach...it's just him and me...and he heads right towards me. I just kind of nod. I'm going to give him a little wave to say hi, and he shakes his head and sticks his hand way out like this. He wants a high five. So I give him a high five.

He just had all this attitude, just gave me this very solemn nod like, *I'm glad you're alive. You and me on the beach.* You know, sometimes you meet somebody, and there's all this personality and it just comes out in one second. Then came this thought...*John, that is a little picture of my heart for you. I know all about your life. I know all about your problems, and I'm not neutral about you. I'm glad you're alive.*

Now can I prove that thought was from God? No. But it helps me understand His heart. Just a nod.

After the eight o'clock service, I had a bunch of people when they were leaving instead of wanting to do handshakes, just wanting to do this. So after this service is done I'll just stand there like this, and anybody who wants to... Then you just think about God this week. You just think about this is God. Now I'm glad you're alive. I'm right there with you.

Very often the Spirit will prompt us with ideas. When that happens...that will happen this week...a thought will come...write somebody a note or encourage somebody who feels alone or serve somebody who is in need or confront somebody who is going down a wrong path or go up to somebody who is lonely. I talked to somebody this week whose life got altered because somebody in this church...they were visiting here...invited them out to eat. It ended up altering the trajectory of their life.

When those thoughts come, the main thing is not to say, "Hey God is speaking to me." What is important is that you actually do what the prompting is. I want to say this to some of you. It may be that you have been obeying those kinds of thoughts, serving God your whole life long and never really identifying that that is God's voice. The main issue is *not* that you say that is God's voice. The main issue is that you actually respond with obedience. That is the adventure, and that is our guiding God.

In the time that is left in this talk, what I want to do is just look at some of the myths that keep us from experiencing God's guidance. Some of the misguided notions...myths...that keep us from an interactive adventure in being led by the Spirit.

First myth is this...God will only speak to and give guidance to spiritual giants. It's just for prophets or missionaries or professionals. The story that shows how misguided this myth is comes from the Old Testament book of Numbers. There was a prophet of God named Balaam. The enemy of Israel, Midian, wanted to use Balaam to speak against Israel. So, he summoned Balaam. Balaam is riding a donkey to go to Midian. God sends an angel to turn Balaam back to Israel. On the road, the donkey sees the angel of God blocking their path. Balaam doesn't see it. So the donkey turns aside. Balaam beats the donkey to get her back on the road. This happens three times. This is in the Bible, the book of Numbers.

Numbers 22, *"Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you to make you beat me three times?' Balaam answered the donkey, 'You have made a fool of me. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now.' The donkey said to Balaam, 'Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?' 'No,' he said."*

The donkey is reasoning with Balaam, not just speaking to him...trying to appeal to logic. *"Have I ever done this?"* "Well, you know you have a good point now that you're saying it." Now God is speaking through a donkey. If a donkey had gone back to the stable and been all puffed up and proud over all the other donkeys, see he would have made an ass of himself. I just did that at 9:30. None of the other services got that one. I don't think we're taping this one. God can speak through anybody He wants. He can speak through a donkey if He wants to. It's not about, you know, it's a sign of spiritual greatness and maturity or something. It's in the hands of a sovereign God. He can speak to a little boy, do whatever He wants to.

Next myth...if I'm always in tune with God, He will have guidance for all my decisions, and I will never have to make any decisions on my own. It's a myth. Think about it as a parent. Would it be a good thing if a parent could make every decision for a child's whole life? If you're a parent, would you like it if your whole child's life you could just say, "Wear these clothes. Take this class. Date this person. Choose this major. Buy this house. Enter this job. Marry this person." And they would always do that. Would you like that? Correct answer would be *no* at this point. Because what would that do for their development? See, here's the thing. If I'm a parent, my main goal for my child isn't any particular outcome or event. My main goal is that they become a really good person, a person of wisdom and courage and grace and mercy and love and truth.

Now to become a good person requires that you will have to think things out and exercise judgment and sometimes make difficult choices in the face of uncertainty and then take accountability and learn. That process is indispensable for the formation of a human being, and that means many, many times in your life when you pray and ask for guidance, God's will for you is going to be...you choose. You choose. Because you'll never grow if you don't do that.

Here is the deal...sometimes the reality is, I don't really want guidance. What I really want is to be spared the anxiety that goes with freedom and choosing and being responsible. God is not a convenient escape from the anxiety of choice and responsibility. God will not let you use Him in that way. Part of God's will for your life is that you grow broad shoulders. God wants broad-shouldered sons and daughters. We want to offload responsibility.

A CEO has taken on a new job, and the retiring/outgoing CEO said to him, "Sometimes you'll make wrong choices. You will. You'll mess up. When that happens, I have prepared three envelopes for you. I left them in the top drawer of the desk. The first time it happens, open #1 and so forth." So for awhile everything goes fine, and then the CEO makes his first mistake, goes into the drawer, opens up envelope #1, and the message reads "Blame me." So he did. "This is the old CEO's fault. He made these mistakes. I inherited these problems." Everybody says, "Okay." Works out pretty well.

Things go fine for awhile, and then he makes his second mistake, opens up envelope #2. This time he reads "Blame the Board." And he does. "It's the Board's fault. The Board has been a mess. I inherited them. They're the problem." Everybody says, "Okay, yeah that makes sense."

Things go on fine for awhile, and then he makes his third mistake, opens up envelope #3, and the message he reads there is, "Prepare three envelopes." There is no way to learn except by choosing. No way to choose except by risking. No way to risk without failing sometimes. No way to fail without feeling pain, and God does not offer guidance as a method of risk avoidance. God's guidance is not about you reducing your anxiety in the face of choice. It's about you becoming the person God intended you to be. That means very often what God will say to you is, "You choose. You choose. You choose. You be wise, get good counsel. You choose. I'll be in all of that mix."

Another myth...claiming God's will is an inner subjective individualistic trump card I can use to get my way. I went to a Christian college, and the form this most often took was would be somebody...usually a guy...would say to somebody...usually a girl..."God told me you're the person I'm meant to marry. God told me." The best response to this is, "Well, you tell God to tell me, and as soon as He does, I'll get back to you." All too often churches and church people can wallpaper over human difficulties with a veneer of pseudo-spiritual language.

A lot of you will have seen this before...somebody who is a pastor at a church will leave it. Maybe they got in trouble. Of course it's not always appropriate to share all the details of that. Or maybe they're leaving to go to a larger church with more prestige and a higher salary. But they will never say, "I'm leaving to go to a bigger church with more prestige and a higher salary." What they'll say is, "I got...called." It's a funny thing. "I don't want to go to that bigger church with more prestige and a higher salary. Personally, I'd rather stay here with you, but God called me, so what can you do?"

Where did we get this language? Kid comes into a house. With him he has a dead rat in his hand, doesn't notice that his mom is talking with the pastor of their church. He is all excited. He says, "Mom, you'll never guess what! I was out behind the garage. There was this rat. I picked up a rock and threw it, and it hit the rat and just laid there. So I went over and kicked it, and then I jumped up and down on it. Then I picked it up, and I threw it against the garage as hard as I could. I picked it up, and I threw it again." Then he sees his mom is there with the pastor, and if looks could kill, he'd be a dead guy. He holds the rat up by the tail and says, "Then the dear Lord called him home."

We get so goofy around this language of calling to bail ourselves out. Sometimes we try to make ourselves look more spiritual, and we're really just being more carnal. We add to all the normal human problems of, you know, greed or whatever else we're after...a veneer of hypocrisy. "And the Lord called me to..." Let's not be that kind of people. Let's be honest and human.

As a general rule, if you think an idea came from God...if you hope and pray, listen, get wise counsel...but if you think an idea came from God, as a general rule, don't tell other people that to get them to do what you want them to do. As a general rule, if an idea really is from God, it will be a really good idea. Be really good if it's from God. The goodness of the idea alone will be enough to convince other people. You don't have to try to, you know, hype it up.

I was at another church. There was a worship planning team meeting, and the guy who was the worship leader had a plan for a service. It was just not a good order of service, wasn't going to work. We told him that. His response to me was, "But the Lord gave me this worship order." Wasn't "Let's talk about the pros and cons of it and get wisdom and you know, see if it would work." "The Lord gave me this." We said, "No, the Lord does much better work than that. Didn't happen that way." God generally speaks in and through community. You don't get to use "God told me" to trump the wisdom of community.

Acts 13, the whole church is gathered for prayer and worship and fasting. God told them, "***Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.***" In Richard Foster's book about celebration of discipline, guidance is actually listed not as an individualistic enterprise, but as a corporate discipline. God guides us together. That is a wonderful part of our heritage, of our legacy as a church, as a people. It's not about any one person, individual, superstar, or something like that. It's through community, wise women and men together speaking into each other's lives.

Another myth...there is nothing anyone can do to be guided by God. Random...nothing you can do. Interesting. Prophet Elijah was discouraged and needed guidance at one time in his life. The Lord led him to be alone for an extended period...40 days. He is on a mountain...some of you know this story...and some spectacular things happen. You think God probably is working through this. Spectacular. A great and powerful wind came down, but the text says the Lord was not in the wind. Then this dramatic earthquake. The text says the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then a fire. The text says the Lord was not in the fire. Elijah has to wait and wait and wait, and finally after the fire...a still, small voice. There was the Lord. Not the big, spectacular, dramatic special effects...a still small voice.

What is my role? I was thinking about a complaint wives will sometimes have about their husbands. This would definitely be Nancy's #1 complaint about me personally. "He just doesn't..." Well actually she would say, "...rest enough in between doing chores around the house." Some of your homes may be different; I don't know. Yeah, the listening thing. I cannot hear God if I don't listen.

Of course reading Scripture is a uniquely primary way we listen to God. The Holy Spirit never leads us in a direction contrary to the teachings of Scripture. You know, folks want to know, "How do I know if a prompting is of God?" Of course part of what to recognize is I'm not infallible on this. But, a couple of little tests...it will never be in contradiction to the teaching of Scripture. Sometimes you hear this: people want to go down a road, and so they will say, "God must want me to go down this road," and it's in violation of the teaching of Scripture. God never contradicts Himself.

The promptings of the Spirit are generally in line with the gifts the Spirit gives. You know, if somebody says, "I want to go sing in the choir." Say they have a terrible voice. That is probably not the Spirit leading them. The Spirit generally leads people in a direction of servanthood. If you find an idea, and it's really all about kind of my fulfillment and not about serving, probably not. There is good reason to question.

One big key is when you think the Spirit is prompting, when it is consistent with the Scriptures, when it's consistent with the fruit of the Spirit, when it moves you in the direction of servanthood, be relentless about saying yes and obeying. Just cultivate this gear.

When we were going fly fishing, we wanted to go right to the river. The guide said we weren't ready. He said we had to go to another spot to practice casting first. I didn't want to practice casting. I didn't want to waste time. I wanted to catch fish. How hard can it be to cast? You just do this and make the fly go wherever you want the fly to go. It turns out, casting is not as easy as it looks. The only thing I hooked that first session was Nancy...several times. Part of following a guide is trust. A wise guide will sometimes take you where you did not want to go.

I was with a good friend earlier this week, and I thought of a relational problem I was having with a whole other person. Some behavior on my part that I am not proud of at all. This thought came, *Tell it to my friend. Just confess it.* That was very consistent with the Scriptures, ***"Confess your sins to each other."*** But my immediate thought was, *I don't want to tell him. It's none of his business. It would be embarrassing to me. I just don't want to do it.* Then there was this still small voice, "Tell him." So I was just like...I had to do it. It was so healing. Once I did it, I thought, *Why would I not do this?* It opened up things for him to tell me about.

Cultivate that gear, that muscle inside where when you think you're on a spirit-guided adventure right now. Yes, yes, I'll do it God. Speak, your servant listens.

Which leads to the last myth...being guided by the Spirit is the myth. Being guided by the Spirit is an optional and private matter. The truth is...to be led and guided by the Spirit isn't just about your own personal spiritual experience. The Spirit, you know, was sent by Jesus. To have a relationship with Jesus means to be indwelt by the Spirit. It's about being used by God in His work in redeeming the world. Paul said, ***"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."***

Imagine if Paul had said *no*. When you say *yes* to being guided by the Spirit, somebody else gets blessed. Jesus lived his life under the guidance of the Spirit. Henri Nouwen was a priest and a brilliant, brilliant teacher at places like Harvard or Yale. He spent the last decade of his life living in a community with severely challenged people...emotional, mental, physical disabilities. Felt guided by God. In ways, it became enormous healing to him and then through which he blessed a whole of folks in what he said and wrote.

One time there was a guy in his community named Trevor, a man with severe mental and emotional challenges who was sent to a psychiatric facility for some evaluation. Henri wanted to visit him, called the hospital to arrange a visit. When the authorities found out Henri Nouwen was coming, they asked him, "Could we have a lunch in the golden room and invite doctors and clergy people, and Ph.D.s, and have them meet Henri Nouwen." Henri said, "Alright."

He showed up, and they took him where the luncheon would be, but Trevor was not there. Henri said, "Where is Trevor?" He was told, "Trevor cannot come to lunch. Patients and staff are not allowed to have lunch together. Plus no patient has ever had lunch in the *golden* room." Now that is a key moment. The default mode here is usually to say, "Well, okay. You're in charge."

By nature, Henri Nouwen was not a confrontational kind of person. He was a very meek man. But being guided by the Spirit is this constant adventure, and here is the thought that came into Henri's mind. It's just this simple, *Include Trevor*. Community is about inclusion. *Trevor ought to be here*. Then Henri had to choose. Here is what happens. It will happen to you. It will happen today. It will happen this week. *Do I respond? Do I say yes? Alright Spirit*.

Henri said, "But the whole purpose of my coming was to have lunch with Trevor. If Trevor is not allowed to attend the lunch, I will not attend either." A way was found for Trevor to attend the lunch. Nouwen writes about this. Here is what is interesting. Everybody thought they were there to hear Henri Nouwen. Of course they're excited this great man was going to be with them, and people as people do would kind of posture and jostle for who could sit next to him. Who could be close to him? It would be kind of cool to be able to say to somebody, "I said this to Henri Nouwen last week." So all that was going on.

At one point Henri was talking to the person on his right, didn't notice that Trevor stood to his feet, lifted up his glass of Coca-Cola. Trevor said, "A toast. I will now offer a toast." Everybody in the room gets real nervous. What is he going to do? What in the world is going on? Then Trevor, this deeply challenged man in a room full of Ph.D.s and doctors and so, Trevor starts to sing, "If you're happy and you know it, raise your glass. If you're happy and you know it, raise your glass. If you're happy and you know it, if you're happy and you know it, if you're happy and you know it..."

Nobody is sure what to do...kind of awkward. Then they think about all that kind of posturing and the "Could I be next to Henri Nouwen?" and the positioning that we do. Here is this man with a level of challenge and brokenness they can only imagine. He is just beaming. He is just so thrilled to be there. So they start to sing, softly at first and then louder and louder until doctors and Ph.D.s and clergymen and Henri Nouwen are all almost shouting, "If you're happy, and you know it, raise your glass."

Henri went on to give a talk, but the moment everybody remembered...the moment God spoke most clearly to that room and touched hearts with a memory that would last as long as they lived...was through the person they all would have said was the least likely person to speak for God. God spoke through Trevor.

God still speaks. The Spirit still guides. The world still gets changed. People still get blessed. God will do it. The Spirit will do it through you. If you're a Jesus follower...the Spirit is in you...that is part of your adventure. Our God...the redeeming, creating Father...judging, comforting...our God is a guiding God. He'll do it for you.

Let's pray. Let's do this. Right now, whatever area of your life it is where you need wisdom, where you need guidance. Maybe it's your relationship. Maybe it's somebody. Maybe it's a friend, family member...you love them. There are just problems, and you're not smart enough to know what to do. A lot of times you try to do something. It messes things up. Just ask, "God would You give me wisdom? I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do. Would Your Spirit guide me this week?"

Maybe it's a worry, anxiety, depression, loneliness. Maybe there is a sin. This has gone on this weekend for some folks where there is just some dark stuff in their life they've been trying to cover it up, hide it over, and part of what the Spirit does is just put a finger on it and say you need to bring that to the light. You need to confess it to somebody. Pray; get help. Maybe it's there. Maybe it's finances. Big decision about what you'll do or where you'll live.

Heavenly Father, thank You that You're a guiding God. Thank You that the same Spirit who guided Jesus guides us. You know how badly we mess up our lives with poor decisions. Would you help each one of us in this room just go on this adventure of walking in the Spirit this week? We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.