

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Guided by God

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 32:8-11 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: John 16:13

SUMMARY

Because our world is a complicated place, we all need guidance sometimes.

Some of our decisions are so important that they could affect our entire future. We're faced with financial issues, health concerns, relational struggles, and all kinds of challenging situations. It could be that we've done everything we can to research a subject, but we're still confused regarding what to do. Or maybe our problems just seem beyond solution. Perhaps others are asking us for advice, and we're not sure what to say. In times like these, we need someone who can give us true and wise counsel, and the only One who never guides us the wrong way is God.

SERMON POINTS

The Lord is a loving heavenly Father who is never too busy to listen to us when we come to Him for guidance.

He's given us a wonderful promise in Psalm 32:8-11 to encourage us when we're in need of His guidance.

The source of the promise is almighty God.

The Creator of the ends of the earth, who has all knowledge and power, is the One who makes this promise: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go" (v. 8). This is a personal commitment from the Lord God. If we will come to Him seeking and believing Him, He will give us instruction and teaching for whatever situation we're facing, and He never makes a mistake. God has complete knowledge of our circumstance, knowing how it began and what the end result will be—if we

obey Him or if we don't. The Lord's pledge to instruct and guide us is a personal message to every follower of Jesus.

The value of this promise depends upon the character of the One who made it.

This is a divine commitment made by God, who never fails to keep His word. We never have to worry that He will not do as He said because He speaks and acts out of His nature—and He is always faithful.

The promise is inclusive.

It encompasses everything we need to know to make the right choice.

■ **Instruction.** First of all, He promises to instruct us with truth (v. 8). The world offers us directions that are full of error, but the Lord's guidance always leads us the right way.

■ **Teaching.** When we open His Word, the Lord teaches us and helps us understand what it means (v. 8). However, having information is just the beginning. To benefit from it, we must apply what we learn to the situation we're facing. Since some of our decisions are not a matter of right and wrong but of what's best for our lives, we also need wisdom and discernment to make the right choices. The Holy Spirit within us has promised to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). His goal is to direct us into the will of God by showing us the difference between truth and error and helping us distinguish between what's good and what's best. Because He knows the future and sees what will result from taking a wrong turn, He guides us into paths that lead to the blessings that come from obedience to God. When we follow His promptings, we won't suffer from the inevitable regrets that follow wrong choices.

■ **Counsel.** “I will counsel you with My eye upon you” (Ps. 32:8). This promise shows us the closeness of God because counseling involves a relationship. It also reveals that we walk under the umbrella of the Lord’s encompassing gaze. As a loving Father, He watches over us, giving wise counsel for life. Since He loves us, has full knowledge of the future, and always wants the best for us, it’s foolish to ignore His wisdom and make decisions based on our own knowledge and understanding. There are so many aspects of the situation we cannot see, but God knows all of them.

■ **Protection.** God’s eye upon us also demonstrates His protection and watchful care over us, wherever we are and whatever we do. He sees what awaits us each day and shows us the right way, even when another path seems like the one to take. Our responsibility is to keep looking up and setting our minds on God. Every decision should prompt us to ask Him what He’d have us do. And if others come to us for guidance, we need to immediately seek wisdom from the Lord. Anytime we offer counsel, we should rely on this promise because we are accountable to God for the advice we give.

The Lord warns those who will not listen.

After giving His people this wonderful promise, God also warns those who won’t heed His instruction, teaching, and counsel.

■ **Do not be stubborn** (v. 9). The Lord wants us to willingly follow His guidance. If we resist Him, we’re like a horse or mule that can only be controlled by the force of a bit and bridle. If we refuse to come near to God, we’ll reap the consequences of not listening to Him.

■ **“Many are the sorrows of the wicked”** (v. 10). Whenever we ignore God’s counsel, we’ll experience trouble and heartache. Sometimes we live in rebellion by simply relying on ourselves and making our own decisions based on what we think is best. But since God has no place in our thinking, we’re walking in disobedience, indifference, and pride. This is a foolish lifestyle, and its fruit will eventually prove to be bitter.

God blesses those who will listen.

In contrast to stubbornness and rebellion, those who trust in the Lord will experience the fruit of obedience.

■ **Lovingkindness shall surround them** (v. 10). If we seek and follow God’s guidance, we’ll see the evidence of His goodness and love. This doesn’t mean we won’t have problems or heartaches, but God will use them to increase our trust in Him and to mature and strengthen us. His lovingkindness will surround us, protecting us on every side. We may falter and fail at times, but if we’ll quickly confess and ask Him to forgive us for not seeking His guidance, He’ll lead us back to the right path.

■ **They will be glad and rejoice** (v. 11). When we follow the Lord’s instructions, we’ll have a sense of peace, contentment, and joy—even while walking through trials and suffering.

RESPONSE

- Where do you usually go for guidance? Have you ever experienced the consequences of turning to the wrong person for advice? What happened?
- Can you think of a time in your life when you were particularly stubborn or ornery? What happened as a result? What lessons did you learn from the experience?
- Now think about a time when you sought the Lord’s guidance and did what He said. What did you learn? What blessings did you experience?

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