

GOD'S WILL: DEEP SEA BUFFALO HUNTING?

Are You Deep Sea Buffalo Hunting?

Finding & Following God's Basic Game Plan

- ❶ Relax, it's not **hard to find!**
Ephesians 5:17

- ❷ It's found on a **highway called obedience.**
Proverbs 4:18-19 & Proverbs 28:9/ Proverbs 14:6; 1:23-33 & Romans 1:18-32/ 2 Peter 1:3-12

- Start with what you know **intuitively.**
- Next, follow the Bible's **clear commands.**

So, before asking God where to live, what job to take
or what college to go to – ask, “Am I . . .”

- ☐ **Following Christ** 2 Peter 3:9 & 2 Corinthians 8:5
- ☐ **Controlled by the Holy Spirit** Ephesians 5:17-18
- ☐ **Staying sexually pure** 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
- ☐ **Thankful** 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- ☐ **Submitting to authority** 1 Peter 2:13-15 & Ephesians 6:6

MIRACLES & MESSES: How God Leads In Special Situations

- ❶ When God has a special plan,
it's usually revealed **one step at a time.**
See Abraham's story in Genesis 12:1–25:8

- ❷ If I've messed up God's “**Plan A.**”
there's always a “**Plan B.**”
Jeremiah 18:1-8/ Ezekiel 18:21-28/ 1 John 1:9

God's Will: Are You Deep Sea Buffalo Hunting?

Food for Thought for the week of December 11, 2005

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. This weekend we heard about "Deep Sea Buffalo Hunting" (looking for God's will in all the wrong places). King Saul did this big time. He wanted direction and help from God, but looked for it in the wrong place and the wrong way. Read

1 Samuel 28:1-20 to find out how and why Saul fell prey to this trap.

Saul's case is an extreme example, but can you think of other ways people seek God's will in the wrong places?

Even in times of spiritual dryness or on the backside of disobedience, there is hope. What do Joel 2:12-14 and Zechariah 1:2-3 have to say about these times in our life?

Joel 2:12-14

"Even now," declares the Lord,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning."
[13] Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.
[14] Who knows? He may turn and have pity
and leave behind a blessing--
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the Lord your God. [NIV]

Zechariah 1:2-3

"The Lord was very angry with your forefathers. [3] Therefore tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the Lord Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the Lord Almighty. [NIV]

2. This weekend we looked at five foundational questions that can help us make sure we're aligned with God's game plan for our life. Look back at each one. How are you doing? Is there any area you need to shore up?

3. The second question #2, "Am I controlled by the Holy Spirit?" may be the most difficult to get our mind around. The following verses will help you better understand what it means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Look up each one and jot down how it adds to your understanding of what the Holy Spirit offers us and how He leads us?

John 16:5-16

"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' [6] Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. [7] But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. [8] When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: [9] in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; [10] in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; [11] and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

[12] "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. [13] But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. [14] He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. [15] All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. [16] "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." [NIV]

Romans 8:5-17

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. [6] The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; [7] the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. [8] Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

[9] You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. [10] But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. [11] And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

[12] Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. [13] For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, [14] because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." [16] The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. [17] Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. [NIV]

Ephesians 5:15-21

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. [18] Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. [19] Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, [20] always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. [NIV]

Job 32:7-9

I thought, 'Age should speak;
advanced years should teach wisdom.'

[8] But it is the spirit in a man,
the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.

[9] It is not only the old who are wise,
not only the aged who understand what is right. [NIV]

Isaiah 11:1-3

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

[2] The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him--
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord--

[3] and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears; [NIV]

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners, [NIV]

4. When God's game plan includes a specific plan for our life, He usually reveals it one step at a time. In 2 Kings 5:1-15, a man named Naaman learned this principle first hand. Read his story and then jot down why you think Naaman was angry about being asked to take the first step and wash in the Jordan.

2 Kings 5:1-15

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

[2] Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. [3] She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

[4] Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. [5] "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. [6] The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

[7] As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

[8] When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." [9] So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. [10] Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

[11] But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. [12] Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

[13] Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'"

[14] So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

[15] Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant." [NIV]

What did God ultimately reveal in this miracle?