



Which Way Should You Go?

What should I do? Which way should I go? How can I know if I'm on the right track?

I get asked these questions a lot. To be candid, I ask these questions a lot. Not too long ago, it was popular to address these types of questions with another question: *What would Jesus do?* (WWJD). The motivation for asking this question is superb—let's lead a life congruent with our Lord. However, it wasn't long before folks noticed the limitations of WWJD as a formula for decision making. WWJD isn't the best question for a young man wondering if he should get married. Nor is WWJD a helpful question for the person (or couple) thinking about buying their first home. RRSPs? Life insurance? I just can't picture Jesus caring much for these things (but we probably should).

So, if not WWJD, what then? If the Bible doesn't speak specifically to our situation, what are we to do? What governing principle, or principles, should we be employing when making key decisions? Shall we 'follow our heart'? Should we listen to our 'gut instinct'? What role do promptings play in our deliberations?

Inner promptings can be helpful. However, promptings can also lead us astray. Promptings can come from God (Nehemiah 7:5). Promptings can also come from self-serving desires (James 4:1-3). This is why promptings alone is not a good approach to decision making. And this is why when I am asked by others for counsel on which way to go I always give a two-pronged answer:

Promptings and Providence.

Promptings, because they can be a function of self-serving desires, need to be tested. I sometimes hear people say, 'I think God is calling me to this', or 'I think God might be calling me to that.' Most often, the person is sharing with me their inner promptings. But, if that's all they are going on, imagine if my counsel employed this approach and I say, 'I don't think God is calling you to that.' Who is correct? The person with the strongest inner promptings? I don't think so.

We need something bigger than inner promptings to help our decision-making. That's where providence comes in. It has been my experience (limited as that may be) that if God is truly prompting you to do something, corresponding providence will eventually follow. It logically follows that if God calls you to 'A', then the door to 'A' will eventually open. Conversely, if our self-serving desires prompt us to pursue 'A', we shouldn't be surprised when we find the door to 'A' locked. Moreover, if we have been led entirely by faulty inner promptings we should thank God for the locked door! We should be like C.S. Lewis who regularly thanked God for

unanswered prayer, realizing in hindsight what a mess he would be in if God granted all of his requests.

Promptings and Providence. I don't want to oversimplify decision-making. This two-pronged approach doesn't guarantee that you will do all the right things all of the time. I do, however, see this as a more sensible approach than merely following one's 'heart' and 'gut instincts'.

As I type this, I see before me decisions to be made—or, forks in the road ahead, as they say. And in the absence of a Bible passage telling me exactly what to do, I need some sensible, God-honouring principles to guide me.

Pray a ton. Ingest all the Scripture you can. And, having done that, let *Promptings and Providence* guide you.