

For those of us who aren't too handy around the house, it would be so great to know of one person we could call anytime anything went wrong with an appliance, a computer, or a water pipe.

Sure, just about all of us have friends who can give advice and solutions on one area of expertise or another, like electronics or car engines or refinishing furniture. But when something springs a leak, jams in the printer, or happens in the fuse box, often our only option is just to flip a coin on the Yellow Pages and make plans to be home between 9:00 and 3:00 next Tuesday.

But we might be able to avoid it—the repair call and the \$50 service charge—if we just had somebody who could diagnose the problem for us, tell us what part to go buy, or let us know if it's something we could put off for a while without hurting anything.

Thankfully, when it comes to the really significant issues and decisions of life, we do have such a Person. The wise, wonderful, and indwelling Holy Spirit is our faithful guide through all things. Let's see what he says to do.

Read Luke 2:25-35

We Christians sometimes live with a fairly deep-seated inferiority complex, if not a spoiled sense of jealousy over the leisurely success we see happening in unbelievers. The psalmist Asaph, for example—boy, you've got to love his inspired honesty—confessed to being pretty bummed out about how his life was stacking up to the ungodly.

On his side of the scorecard: affliction, punishment, not much to show for his daily duties and disciplines. On the *other*: full tables of food, carefree lifestyles, and “an easy time until they die” (Psalm 73:4).

Or at least that's how it seemed in the middle of an average day for Asaph, when work was hard and his shoulders were tired.

But there was one place he could go to get his head screwed back on right, a sacred opportunity he could take to realign and reorient. “When I tried to understand all this,” he said, “it seemed hopeless until I entered God's sanctuary. Then I understood” (Psalm 73:16-17).

When quieted in God's presence, he was able to realize afresh that this path which often seems so blind and impassable to our human eyes is not really what it appears. Though the Spirit guides us down trails we may not know or feel confident about, they are passageways he has already blazed through like a warrior, stirring up his “zeal like a soldier,” shouting, roaring, ultimately prevailing over all our obstacles and enemies (Isaiah 42:13).

So lifting up his downcast eyes from the ground, feeling a heavenly breeze kiss his face, Asaph remembered again that God was leading him to places more filling than any banquet dinner, more fun than any night on the town.

“As for me, God's presence is my good” (Psalm 73:28), this one who leads me on to glory.

Rain or Shine

We can count on God's loving guidance the rest of our lives—even in times of intense trouble and suffering. Psalm 107 speaks of those who had spent long seasons in the wilderness, nights locked up in prison, endless days of storm at sea. Yet the Spirit "guided them to the harbor they longed for" (vs 30). They weren't left to thrash it out themselves, nor were they doomed to suffer forever, God's hand carried them through.

His guidance even prevails through times of failure. David's expressions captured in Psalm 139 are certainly worshipful enough—"Where can I go to escape Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence," (vs 7). But they seem to be words learned through hard experience, periods when he really *had* wished he could find a place behind God's back, slinking away, hoping the Lord wouldn't notice. Yet "*even there* Your hand will lead me: Your right hand will hold on to me" (vs 10).

We children of God can be totally assured that his Spirit's guidance is there when we need it . . . perhaps even if we don't want it.

All The Way Home

Certainly his guidance comes to us most clearly and directly when we're walking faithfully with him through even our most ordinary moments, times when we could easily be tempted to tell the Spirit to take the day off if he wants.

When those prophetic words later used by Christ on the cross become ours each day – "Into Your hand I entrust my spirit" (Psalm 31:5)—that's when we're in the most confident place to discern his leading. When our minds and hearts are routinely accustomed to thinking his way, it's no stretch at all to ascertain how to walk his way.

But if this matter of the Spirit's guidance still seems sketchy to you—as if it makes nice sermon material but falls pretty flat between most other hours of operation—receive this as your assignment:

Start asking people who've lived with the Lord for forty, sixty, eighty years if his Spirit has been faithful to guide them through the circuitous journey of life. See if, as you speak to them, they won't "go around Zion, encircle it; count its towers, note its ramparts; tour its citadels . . . tell a future generation: 'This God, our God forever and ever—He will lead us eternally'" (Psalm 48:12-14).

Indeed, he will.

Luke 2:25 "This man was righteous and devout . . . and the Holy Spirit was on Him"

What is it about being "devout" that makes the Spirit's guidance to much more likely to show up?

Luke 2:27 “Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple complex”

Does the Holy Spirit really take an interest in minor details like this? How involved is he in our little decisions?

Luke 2:33 “His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him”

Simeon’s words came down with weight and gravity. When has that happened to you?

The Spirit gives us guidance and direction. When seen through the Spirit’s eyes, each day can become an adventure in service and ministry. Every moment is part of a cohesive plan held together by his divine wisdom and lived out through hearts, hands, and feet being trained to react more smoothly each day to his voice. Inside of this is freedom and meaning. . .and the fun of being a Christian.

Holy Spirit, it’s not always easy to know where you’re leading, but help me always to know that I can trust you.