

PRAYING FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE

PSALM 139: 23-24

Introduction:

How do we relate to the God who knows all things, sees all things, can do all things? Surely such knowledge fills the heart with a desire to please Him in all things. This desire gave birth to this prayer of David.

Surely part of this prayer for divine direction is born in a desire to maximize the nature of God in his life. If He is all wise, why should we not enjoy direction from Him.

I. REMEMBER THE ONE TO WHOM YOU PRAY.

David addresses this prayer to El, the mighty God of power. He prays with an awareness of what he has just affirmed in the earlier part of his prayer.

1. Since God knows you fully, you do not need to try to inform or educate him.
2. Since God is everywhere, you can pray with a confidence that He is near as you pray.
3. Since God can do all things, you can ask in faith that nothing will be beyond His ability.

II. BE AWARE OF YOUR VULNERABILITY TO EVIL.

1. This prayer probably came in the mature years of David's life—
God usually works in the life of His children to give them a self-awareness that brings humility.
2. When we are opposing the evil that is in the world, it is easy to forget our potential for evil. We too have a fallen nature that can be actively evil.
3. This should save us from pride and arrogance which have no place in the prayer for divine direction.

III. INVITE GOD'S LOVING EXAMINATION.

1. We must recognize the inadequacy of our self-understanding.
Our hearts are deceitful.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings." (Jeremiah 17:9-10, NKJV)

2. God is the only One who can fully search and know the heart.
3. God is the only One who can fully evaluate our thoughts.
4. We invite Him to do this examination so He can inform us of our need.

5. The desire to avoid any hurtful or grievous way that would offend the Lord of our hearts.

IV. ASK FOR GOD'S WISE DIRECTION.

1. The everlasting way can be the ancient way. Some of the translators so render it. It would voice the concern expressed by Jeremiah,

"Thus says the Lord: "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" (Jeremiah 6:16, NKJV)

2. The everlasting way is probably the way that leads to eternal life in its fullness.

Jesus spoke about the two ways of life—

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14, NKJV)

It is prayer that God will SHOW you the way.

Since we are spiritually blind, it is so easy for us to miss it.

It is a prayer that God **will take me by the hand and lead me into the way.**

It is a prayer that God will use His word, His Spirit, His providences, His church, and His grace to lead me into this everlasting life, a relationship with Him that will last forever.

It is a prayer that God will continue to lead me through my whole life until I arrive safely in the Holy City. Amen.

What this prayer presents to us is obviously not a casual every-day kind of prayer. Wesley Duewel, a former missionary to India, gives testimony about how he went about this kind of prayer. He discovered that life in this world and the busyness of life tends to dull us to hearing the voice of God and experiencing His leadership. So he would set aside an extended time in which he would fast, read the scriptures and pray. He said it would usually take about fifty chapters from the Bible before he would be able to really hear the voice of the Lord, and have a sense of leadership. He wrote, "I have at times read as many as fifty chapters from the Bible before I was completely alone with God. But on some such occasions I have received such unexpected guidance that my life has been greatly benefited." (John Piper, Taste and See, p. 116)