

A Closed Door

Closed doors happen in life. Closed doors can be hard. When you have an idea, but something outside of your control causes the door to slam shut, it can be devastating.

Did you know there was a time when the apostle Paul, along with some of his friends, found themselves facing a closed door? They wanted to do big things for God. They knew where they wanted to go. They wanted to serve Jesus Christ by telling people the good news. They had pure motives, but the doors were slammed shut, and they found themselves at a dead end, not knowing where to go, or what to do next, but God had them right where He wanted them. God was guiding.

GOD GUIDES HIS CHILDREN BY CLOSING AND OPENING DOORS.

How does God guide? **Above all, He guides us through His word.** But He has a lot of other ways to guide us as well. He guides us through decisions,

difficulties, disagreements, and doors - doors that are open and doors that are closed.

I want to offer you 3 principles to help us navigate God's guidance through His closed and open doors.

Principle #1 - Closed doors are God's responsibility.
16:6-8

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.

Having run out of land, and nothing to show for it, they were in the seaport city of Troas staring west at the Aegean Sea listening to the sound of the waters, scratching their heads, wondering what in the world is going on.

But we must notice this in verses 6 through 8: Who took credit for the closed doors? It was God. V. 6 - The

Holy Spirit - the Spirit of God forbade them from speaking the Word in Asia.

V. 7 - The Holy Spirit - The Spirit of Jesus stopped them from entering Bithynia.

The Bible uses those terms interchangeably (Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Jesus). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He's the same Holy Spirit, because God is Father, Son, and Spirit.

He is the sovereign God of all things. He took credit for closing the doors on Paul. The same principle applies to us: Closed doors are God's closed doors.

Are you will to trust that closed doors belong to God?

Principle #2 - Open doors are God's responsibility.
16:9-10

⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

For weeks, they had been left hanging. While traveling from place to place the doors continued to close. FINALLY! In Troas, they got their answer.

I want to talk for a moment about the word “vision”. We want to consider this idea with caution. Many people have claimed to have visions of God who had not (Jeremiah 23:31-32).

1. Many of the men in the Bible who had visions from God were also chosen by God to write the Bible. We were not chosen to write the Bible.
2. Getting a sign from God doesn't guarantee you'll obey Him. The nation of Israel saw plenty of miraculous signs from God, but on repeat, they failed to obey. Who's to say we'd do any better?
3. We must remember this was in a time before the Bible was completed. Chuck Swindoll said, “Without a complete Bible you need visions. When you have a complete Bible, until you have exhausted the written source, I'd suggest you not look for dreams and visions and faces of Jesus in a taco. You need the Word of God, a bended knee, and a willingness to wait.”

Principle #3 - Obedient hearts are our responsibility.
16:11-12

While God sovereignly takes responsibility for the doors He closes and the doors He opens, He leaves us with the responsibility of obedience.

*¹⁰ And when Paul had seen the vision, **immediately** we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. ¹¹ So, setting sail from Troas, we made a **direct voyage** to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.*

Once they were given the open door to do what they knew was God's will - preach the gospel - , They immediately made a direct voyage, and God had their back.

My challenge to you this morning: Begin to see your life as God guiding you by opening and closing doors.

Be okay when He closes a door, and be ready to obey when He opens a door.