

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE –

“Direction for Today” — Acts 8:26-40

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MAIN IDEA

Since the beginning of human thought there has been the debate between fate and self-will. The former is satisfied to relinquish their destiny to something that has predetermined the course of everything. Humans merely take a passive role in life's outcomes. Freedom of the will interprets life with the idea that actions stand on their own. They produce responsibility and consequences for choices the person makes individually. Humans for millennia have observed the conditions of life and have argued for the source of their situations. Paul knew his audience in Athens when he wove both aspects of responsibility into his Gospel message. God acts predeterminately, “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has **determined** their **preappointed** times and the boundaries of their dwellings.” But then God invokes choice, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now **commands all men everywhere to repent.**” (Acts 17:26, 30.) The sermon provoked both philosophical schools, the Stoics and the Epicureans to react and question Paul. This paradox spills over into Christian theology and belief too. Counseling sessions very often distill down to either, “I can't believe God is doing this to me.” Or, “I can't believe I did this to myself.” It's no wonder that some frustrated Christians resort to spiritual luck, chance or superstitions to find help. But before we reach for the four-leafed clover, or start casting lots, *What does the Bible say about how one can know which direction in life they are to take?*

SCRIPTURAL INSIGHT

The Ethiopian eunuch had risen to power, influence and wealth in service to his country and queen. But the path to rank and influence in one culture was to his detriment in another. While wealthy enough to buy his own scroll of Isaiah, his spiritual quest in Judaism would have ended in the exclusion of Deuteronomy 23. But the eunuch had found solidarity with the humiliated and shamed servant of God in Isaiah 53. Just like in Samaria, Philip's obedience to the promptings of God would help enlarge the family of Christ and extend the promise of inclusiveness in Isaiah 11.

READ & DISCUSS

Read out loud together Acts 8:26-40, paying special attention to how Philip was able to hear and respond to God's leading. *How can believers today cultivate this same discipline?*

Acts 8:29-30a *Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.” So Philip ran to him.*

- *How does one discern if it is God speaking to them or if they are speaking to themselves? How is obedience to God related to how well one is able to hear God speak? When have you heard God speak to you in spur of the moment situations? What happened when you obeyed these promptings? How can one confirm that what they felt led to do was from the Lord?*
- The gospel is best received when it is personal. The Ethiopian eunuch no doubt kept reading to **Isaiah 54:4-7** after his accepting Christ and baptism. *How can believers make the gospel more personal to those they share with? Why is friendship so important when relating God to those you know? What areas of life does the believer and non-believer share that can bridge the gospel?*

RESOURCE

Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will by Keven DeYoung. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014. <https://www.amazon.com/Just-Do-Something-Liberating-Approach/dp/0802411592>

PRAYER & TESTIMONY



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Based on Pastor Bill Buffington's message from April 22, 2018.

Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/topical/video/direction-for-today/>