

Outline Two



WELCOME

How do you most often hear God's voice?



WORSHIP

Fellow Traveller

Requires preparation: a copy of *The Horse and His Boy* by C. S. Lewis (or you will be able to locate the text on the Internet at www.mylibrarybook.com).

Read from Chapter 11, *The Unwelcome Fellow Traveller*. Begin at: "I do think," said Shasta, "that I must be the most unfortunate boy that ever lived in the whole world" and continue reading to the end of the chapter.

Consider how God has travelled your journey with you, often unacknowledged, as Aslan was in Shasta's life, yet actively working for your good. Can you see how he has been involved in the people you have met, the timing of events, in comfort, in trouble? Share recollections with each other. Tell your stories and then finish with prayer, giving all the credit to the 'Unwelcome Fellow Traveller'.



WORD

Read Acts 8:4-40 to the group and ask yourselves these four questions:

What guidance did Philip have to leave Jerusalem?

What guidance did he have to start preaching the gospel in Samaria?

What guidance did he have to leave the revival and go into the desert?

What guidance did he have to speak to the Ethiopian in the chariot?

Background to the passage

In this passage we get a look into the life of Philip and his journey. What is interesting is what we can learn about his decision making processes. There are some questions which come up in our hearts again and again: does God love me, and how can I know that I am doing the right thing or how does God guide me? It is the second of these questions that we can learn something from Philip in this story. He leaves Jerusalem for Samaria, fleeing for his life when persecution broke out. He didn't need guidance; circumstances motivated his action. It was go or die. He would have needed specific guidance to stay. When he gets there he begins to preach the gospel and many responded. What guidance did he have? Jesus told everybody to be a witness and Philip was simply living by this principle, being obedient.

We learn that most of the time our guidance is to live by the principles that Jesus taught and demonstrated. The principles and values of the kingdom of God as communicated through our understanding of scripture. We have also been given the ability to think. We take what we know and reason it out. We take responsibility for our decisions and

do the work necessary to make good choices, made from the principles gained from life and scripture.

However, in the midst of this revival Philip is told by an Angel to go into the desert. This is a different kind of guidance. There may be a few times in our lives where God wants us to do something specific so he speaks loud enough for us to hear. Here he speaks the loudest he can by sending an angel, because if you were in the middle of a revival you would not leave unless you had real certainty - angels do that! Then he finds himself in the desert and comes across a chariot. This time he doesn't need an angel. He is prompted by the spirit. Maybe in his travels he has learnt more about hearing that small voice. He acts on the principle of 'loving your neighbour' and finds the Ethiopian open to God in a startling way.

It is comforting to know that if we need a change of direction God will speak loud enough for us to hear. Otherwise he has given us the principles to make these decisions and he wants us to take responsibility for our choice. Sometimes the invitation from him is simply 'what would you like to do', 'what would bring life to you?' Sometimes he doesn't seem to mind saying 'I will be with you anyway'.

Questions

What has been your experience of making decisions?

Are there stories from the group about supernatural guidance where they have had a prompt from the Holy Spirit, or a prophecy?

Pray in the Word

Ask the group to tell their stories about how they made a decision by scriptural principle and life experience.

If there are current situations for group members who are struggling to make a decision spend some time sharing these things and praying for them.



WITNESS

We are going to spend the next three witness sessions looking at some frameworks that may help us as we reach out to others.

It's useful to have a framework for your idea which helps you to strategize and plan. Laurence Singlehurst, in his book *Sowing Reaping Keeping*, lays out a framework, which he has modified slightly to use here. (<https://celluk.org.uk/product/sowing-reaping-keeping/>)

John 3:16 has three dynamics to it which might help us. Encounter, engage and embrace. Let's start this week by looking at Encounter.

1. Encounter – God sends his son – mission begins with an encounter – our project starts at an encounter, be it a coffee shop, or befriending people on the streets. And the goal of that encounter is not to see people come to faith there and then but is to establish trust and relationships where the people we are reaching out

to can see that we the team are normal people and they begin to like and trust us. Then when they understand that we are people of faith because they like and trust us it is not weird and they begin to get a new sense of what God is like. So, the encounter is the first level of that project and this is the bit that you will do week in month out year in year out dependant on what you do.

Discus and pray together about what this will mean for you as a group.

