

Where God wants you to be.

To do what God wants you to do, you have to be what God wants you to be, where God wants you to be.

- *Who are you?*
- *Where are you?*
- *What are you doing?*
- *Are you content with being busy or do you want to be effective?*

Be who God
wants you to *be*.

Go where God
wants you to *go*.

Do what God
wants you to *do*.



Four ways God leads us (John Piper)

1) Decree:

God sovereignly decrees and designs circumstances so that we end up where he wants us to be even if we don't have any conscious part in getting there. For example, Paul and Silas found themselves in jail, and the result was the salvation of the jailer and his household (**Acts 16:24-34**). This was God's plan, but not Paul's. God does this often—putting us in places that we did not plan or decide to be. This is the leading of decree. It is unique above the other three leadings because it includes them (since God's decrees include all our decisions) and because it happens infallibly (since “no purpose of [God's] can be thwarted,” **Job 42:2**). The other three leadings of God involve our being *consciously* led.

2) Direction:

This is simply what God does for us by giving us the commands and teachings of the Bible. They direct us specifically what to do and what not to do. The Ten Commandments are one example. Don't steal. Don't kill. Don't lie. Or the Sermon on the Mount: Love your enemies. Or the Epistles: Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Put on humility. This is the leading of direction. God reveals his directions in the Bible.

Four ways God leads us (John Piper)

3) Discernment:

Most of the decisions we make are not spelled out specifically in the Bible. Discernment is how we follow God's leading through the process of spiritually sensitive application of biblical truth to the particularities of our situation. **Romans 12:2** describes this: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." In this case God does not declare a specific word about what to do. But his Spirit shapes the mind and heart through the word and prayer so that we have inclinations toward what would be most glorifying to him and helpful to others.

4) Declaration:

This is the least common means of God's leading. He simply declares to us what we should do. For example, according to **Acts 8:26**, "An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, 'Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.'" And according to **Acts 8:29**, "The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.'"

God's plans for Isaac.

Genesis 26:1-6.

There was very little food in the land.

The same thing had been true earlier, in Abraham's time.

Isaac went to Abimelech in Gerar.

Abimelech was the king of the Philistines.



The Lord appeared to Isaac. He said, Do not go down to Egypt.

Live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay here for a while.

I will be with you and give you my blessing. I will give all of these lands to you and your children after you. And I will keep the promise I made with an oath to your father Abraham.

I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky.

And I will give them all these lands. All nations on earth will be blessed because of your children. I will do all of those things because Abraham obeyed me. He did what I required. He kept my commands, my rules and my laws. So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

Are you interested in God has plans for you.

God's word to the Israelites in exile in Babylon.

Jeremiah 29:11.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future..

- Are you where God wants you to be?
- Did God have any say in who you married?
- Are you in the job he wants you in?
- Are you in the Church he wants you in?
- Would God have any say if want to leave the country and settle in a foreign land?

Or do you have your own plans?

James 4:13-16.

Now listen, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that. As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.



If you think that where you are doesn't matter.

- ❑ **Remember about 500 people were on the Mountain when Jesus ascended.**

They were told by him to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them.

- ❑ **Only 120 were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost.**

Imagine missing out on an event like that, yet many professing Christians miss out on blessings with irregular attendance, only wanting big attendance high value entertainment gatherings and are not willing to press through and persevere in seeking, knocking and searching for the Lord.



Where are you?

God asked Adam this question.

Genesis 3:8-10.

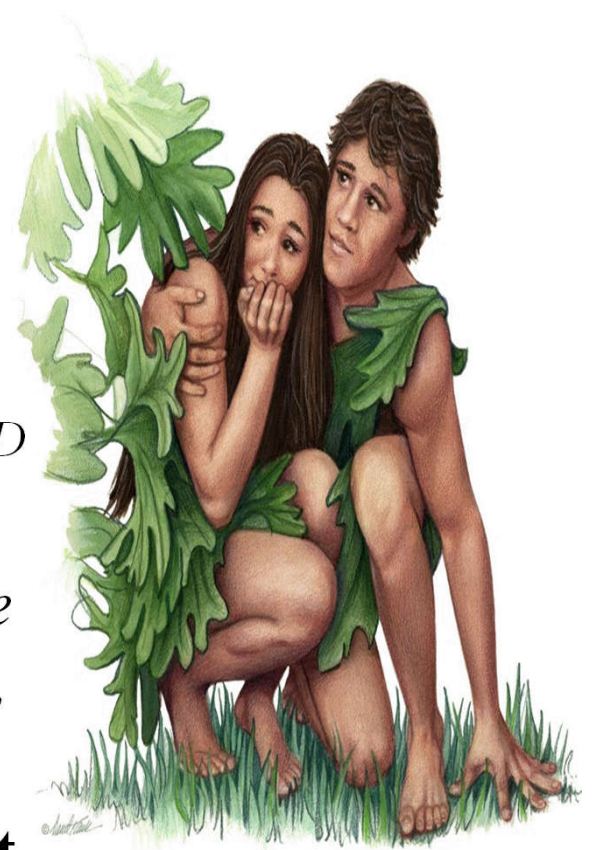
Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.

This was an exercise in futility on Adam’s part.

Psalms 139:7-10.

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.



You cannot hide from God.

Hebrews 4:13.

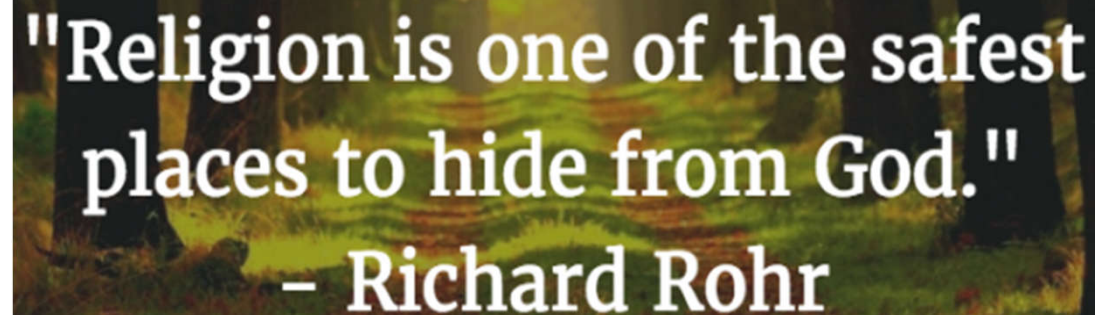
Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Jeremiah 23:24.

Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

So if one looks at Scripture it is obvious that you cannot hide from God, but many still fall into the trap of trying to do that, they may

not try to run to another place like Jonah did but they hide at home instead of dealing with an offence and trying to resolve it, or they hide in another Church. They may even hide behind some activity or ministry but it's a fig leaf, a smoke screen to cover their disobedience and rebellion against the will of God.

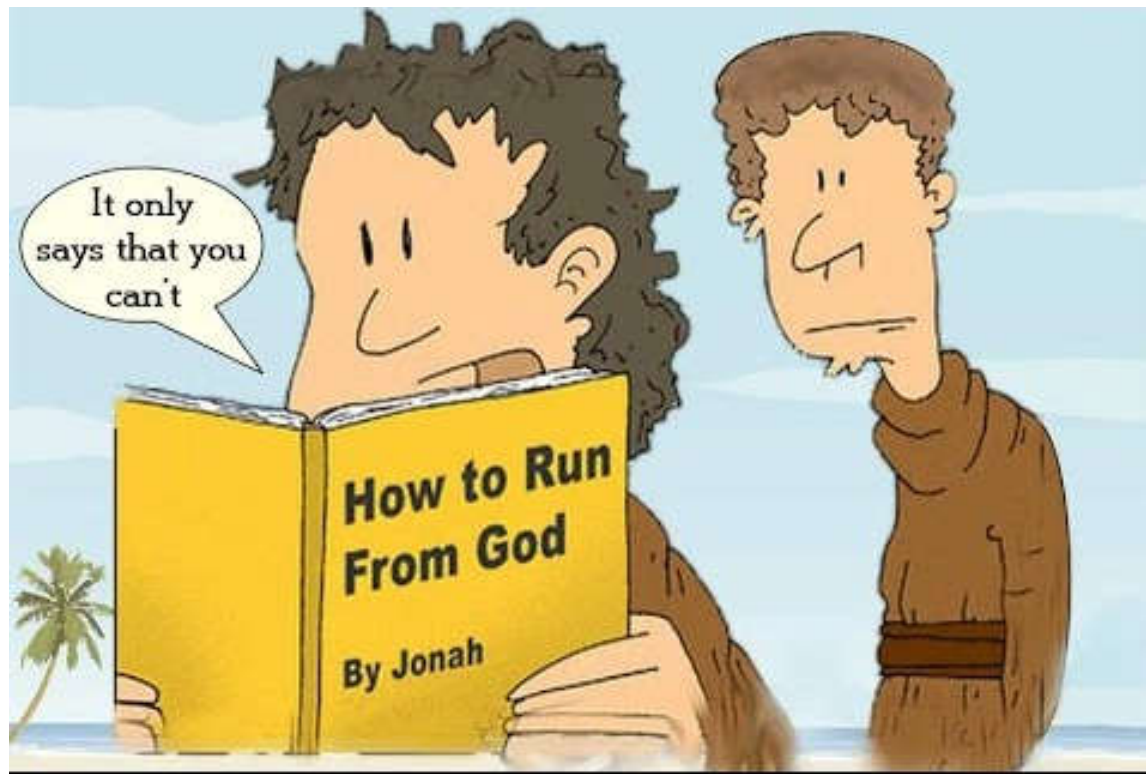
A quote by Richard Rohr: "Religion is one of the safest places to hide from God." – Richard Rohr. The text is overlaid on a background image of a forest path with sunlight filtering through the trees.

**"Religion is one of the safest
places to hide from God."
– Richard Rohr**

Jonah made the mistake of trying to run away from God.

Jonah 1:1-17.

The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.



Jonah.

The fact of the matter is that Jonah did not want to be where God wanted him to be because he did not want to do what God wanted him to do.

Jonah 4:1-11.

But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.

He prayed to the Lord, Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish.

I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.



Naomi.

People sometimes move because things are uncomfortable, like famine or the threat of war and in doing so move out of God's will like the Israelites who were told not to flee to Egypt to escape the threat of war.

Ruth 1:1-4.

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion.

They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Naomi.

Ruth 1:6-7 & 19-22.

⁶When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah....

¹⁹ So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

²⁰ “Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

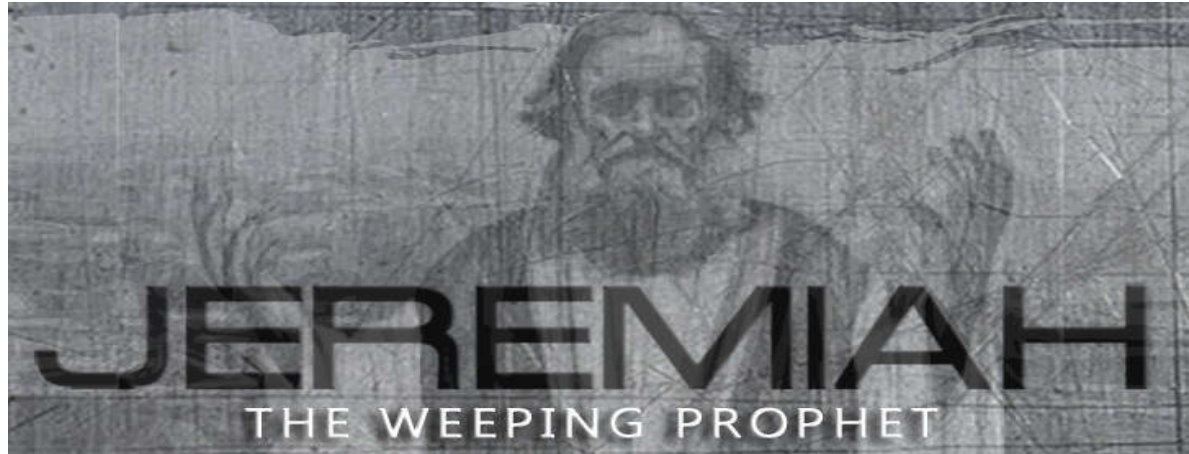
²² So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

The Israelites wanted to flee war and go to Egypt.

Jeremiah 42:15-22.

Then listen to what the LORD says to you who are left in Judah.

He is the LORD who rules over all. He is the God of Israel.



He says, Have you already made up your minds to go to Egypt? Are you going to settle down there? Then the war you fear will catch up with you there. The hunger you are afraid of will follow you into Egypt. And you will die there. In fact, that will happen to all those who go and settle in Egypt. All of them will die of war, hunger and plague. Not one of them will live. None of them will escape the trouble I will bring on them. He is the LORD who rules over all.

He is the God of Israel. He says, My burning anger has been poured out on those who used to live in Jerusalem. In the same way, it will be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. People will call down curses on you. They will be shocked at you. They will say bad things about you. And they will bring shame on you. You will never see this place again.

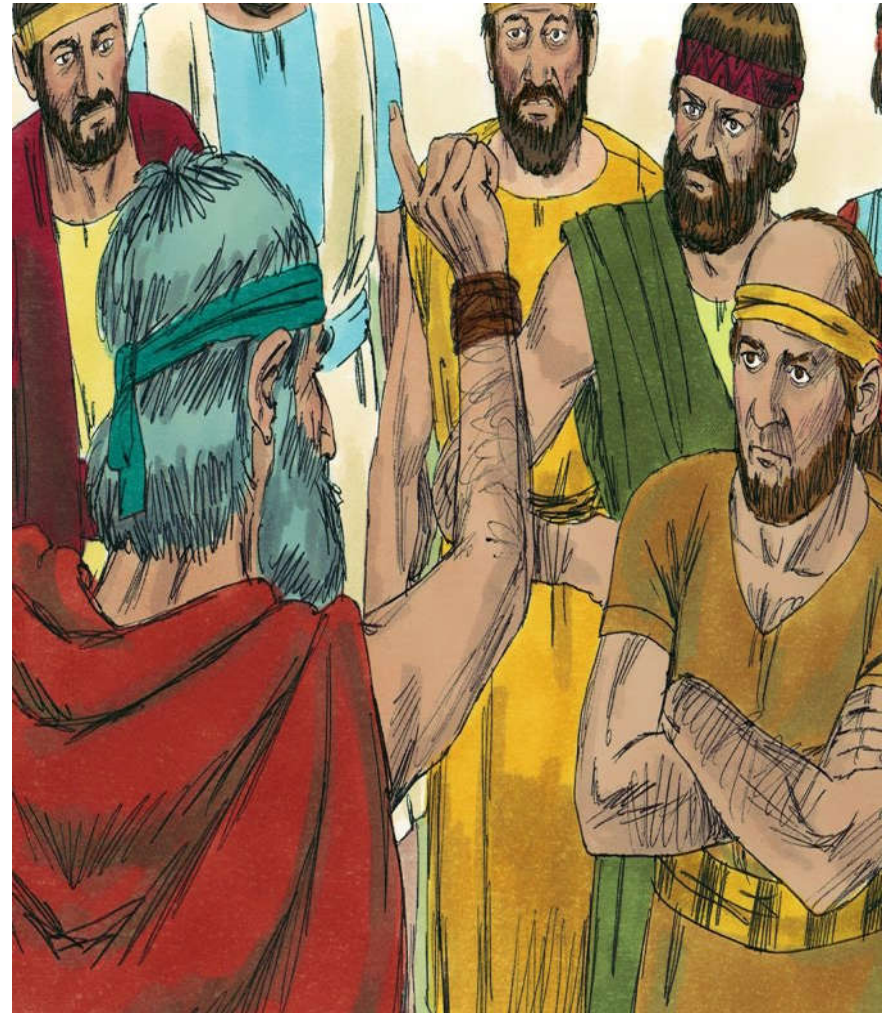
The Israelites wanted to flee war and go to Egypt.

Jeremiah 42:15-18 (continued)

The LORD has spoken to you who are left in Judah. He has said, Do not go to Egypt. Here is something you can be sure of, I am warning you about it today.

You made a big mistake when you asked me to pray to the LORD your God. You said, Pray to the LORD our God for us. Tell us everything he says. We'll do it.

I have told you today what the LORD your God wants you to do. But you still haven't obeyed him. You haven't done anything he sent me to tell you to do. So here is something else you can be sure of. You will die of war, hunger and plague. You want to go and settle down in Egypt. But you will die there.



The Israelites did not want to enter Canaan.

Numbers 14:1-4.

That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness!

Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword?

Our wives and children will be taken as plunder.

Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt? And they said to each other, We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.



The Israelites decide to enter Canaan.

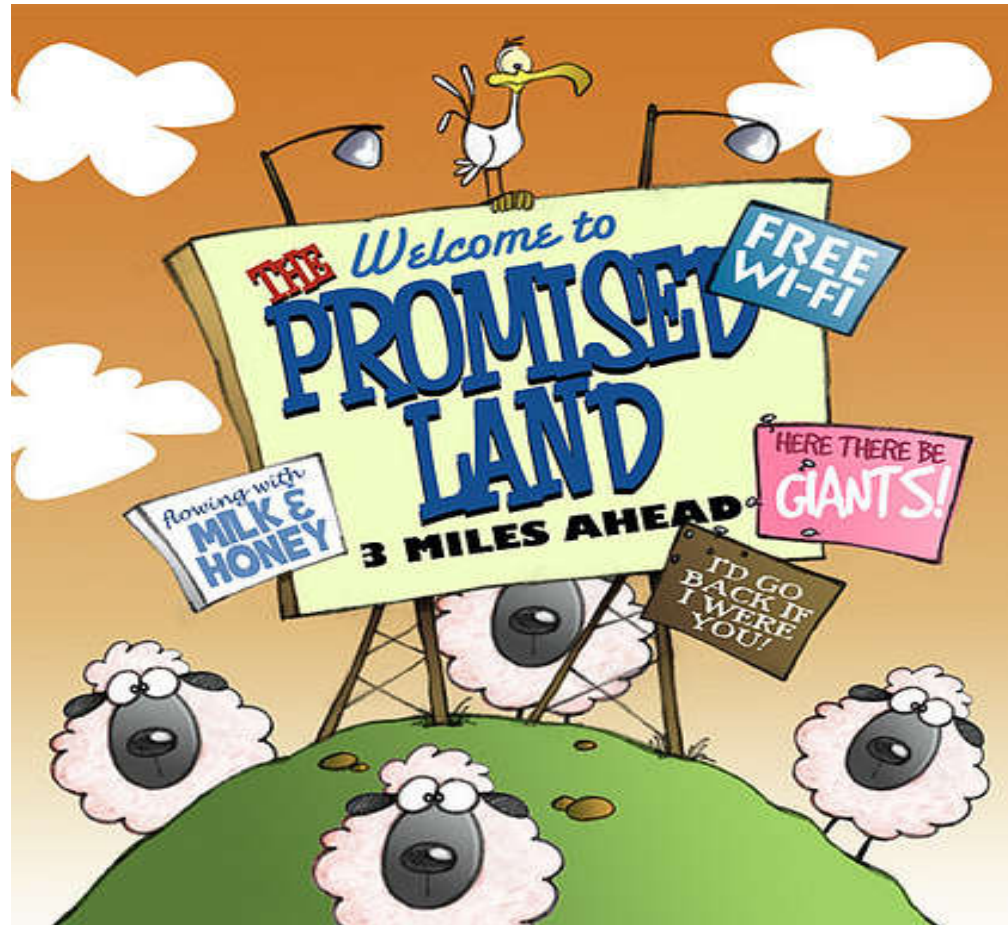
Numbers 14:39-43.

When Moses reported this to all the Israelites, they mourned bitterly. Early the next morning they set out for the highest point in the hill country, saying, Now we are ready to go up to the land the LORD promised.

Surely we have sinned!

But Moses said, Why are you disobeying the LORD's

command? This will not succeed! Do not go up, because the LORD is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, for the Amalekites and the Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword.



But there are times God uses circumstances to move us.

I believe that the Lord used the persecution in Jerusalem to get the disciples on the move so that the Gospel could be spread.

Acts 8:1-3.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

But Saul began to destroy the church.

Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.



But there are times God uses circumstances to move us.

When a mother eagle builds her nest she starts with thorns, broken branches, sharp rocks, and a number of other items that seem entirely unsuitable for the project. But then she lines the nest with a thick padding of wool, feathers, and fur from animals she has killed, making it soft and comfortable for the eggs.

By the time the growing birds reach flying age, the comfort of the nest and the luxury of free meals makes them quite reluctant to leave.

That's when the mother eagle begins stirring up the nest. With her strong talons she begins pulling up the thick carpet of fur and feathers, bringing the sharp rocks and branches to the surface. As more of the bedding gets plucked up, the nest becomes more uncomfortable for the young eagles. Eventually, this and other urgings prompt the growing eagles to leave their once-comfortable abode and move on to more mature behaviour.

Maybe you don't want to go anywhere, perhaps you are comfortable and God will have to make you uncomfortable to move.

God's plans for Israel.

Genesis 45:16-20.

When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, Tell your brothers, Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.

You are also directed to tell them, Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.



Elisha.

1 Kings 17:1-10.

Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.

Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there. So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the LORD came to him: Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food. So he went to Zarephath.

God leads through dreams.

The wise men: They were led by a star and then guided by God in a dream to go home a different route.

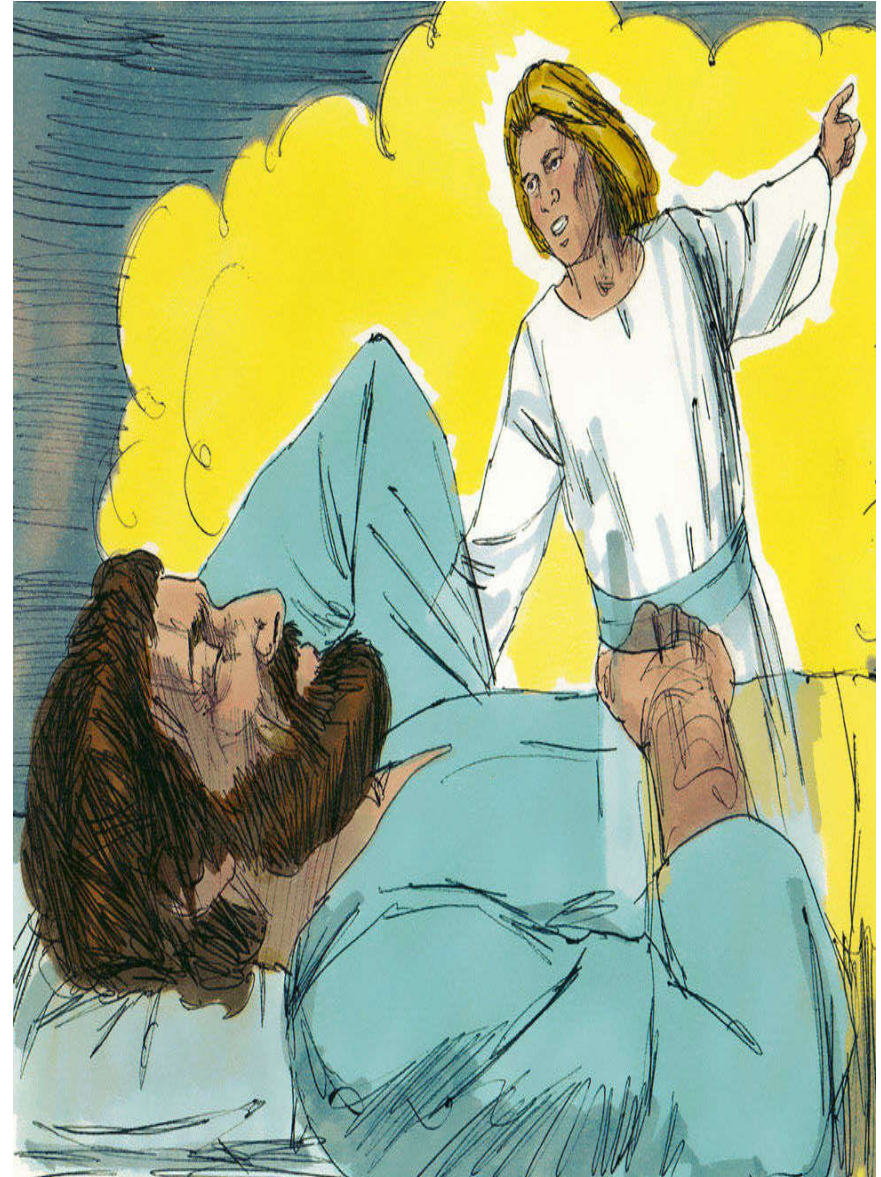


God leads through dreams .

Joseph was told by an angel to flee to Egypt.

Matthew 2:13-15.

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Get up, he said, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him. So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: Out of Egypt I called my son.

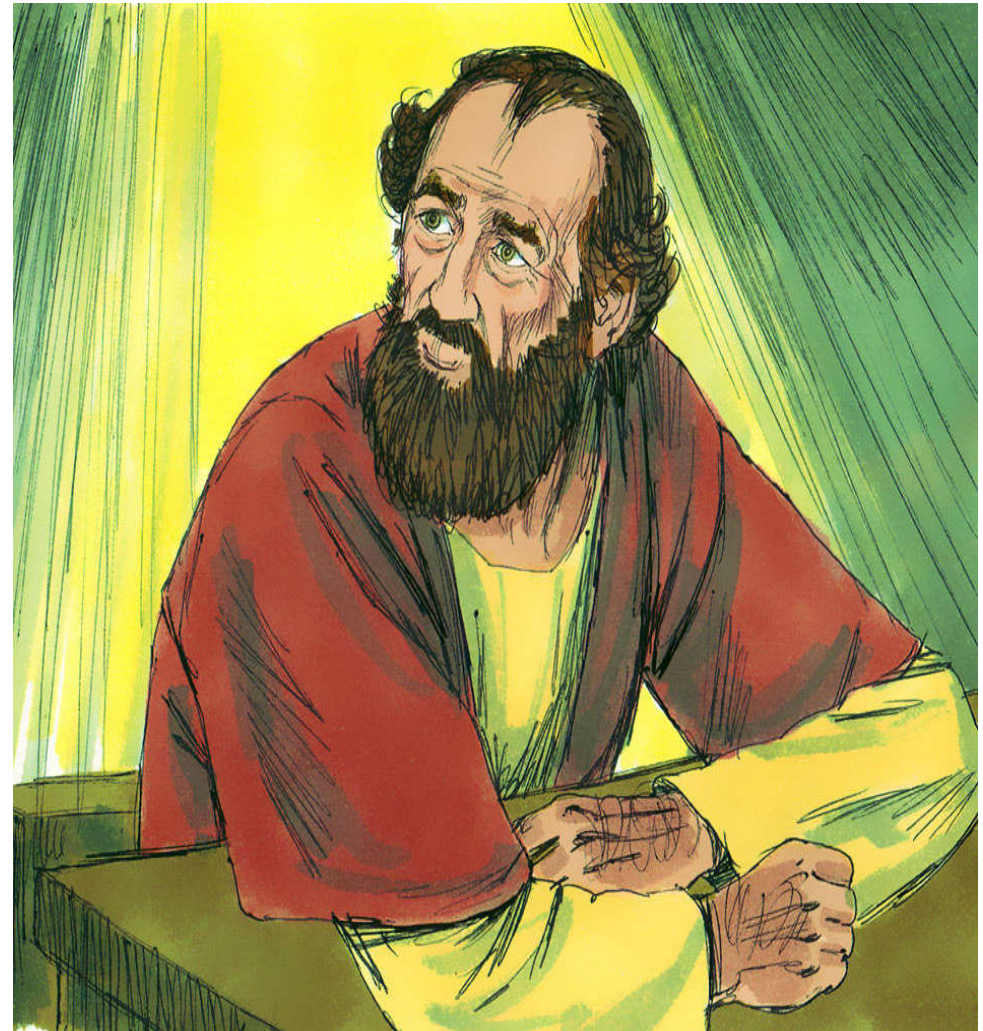


God leads by His Spirit and speaks in visions.

Acts 9:10-12.

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, Ananias! Yes, Lord, he answered.

The Lord told him, Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.



God leads by His Spirit and speaks in visions.

Acts 16:6-10.

Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, Come over to Macedonia and help us.

After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.



However the Apostles had their differences.

Paul and Barnabas part ways.

Acts 15:36-41.

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.

Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them,

but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.



Abraham.

Abraham was prepared to leave Ur of the Chaldea's and his father and follow wherever the Lord led him.

Hebrews 11:8-10.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

But Abraham fled to Egypt during a time of famine.

Genesis 12:10-13.

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians see you, they will say, This is his wife. Then they will kill me but will let you live. Say you are my sister so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.

Abraham and Lot separate.

Lot chose what was appealing to the flesh.

Genesis 13:1-16.

So Abram said to Lot, Let's not have any quarrelling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives.

Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you

go to the right, I'll go to the left. Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east.

The place Lot chose to settle affected his spiritual walk and he eventually left with nothing.



Abraham and Lot separate.

Genesis 13:1-16.

The two men parted company: Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD. The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.

We don't have to be living comfortably and blessed as a sign of God's favour.

On the contrary Joseph's preparation for leadership was prison, Moses was prepared in the desert.

Lot.

2 Peter 2:6-8.

If he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)



Many people spend their lives dissatisfied with:

- The country they live in.
- The town they live in.
- The suburb they live in.
- The house they live in.
- The Job or position they have etc

The Unhappy Work Epidemic: Why So Many People Are Unhappy at Work and What to Do About It



Article from Every Home for Christ.

Have you ever been somewhere you didn't want to be?

Maybe it was a job, a town or even a marriage. Maybe it was a stage in life, like singlehood or a state in life, like a disability.

It's very possible that as you read this, you're wishing you were somewhere else-anywhere else-living a different life, but you know it's not likely that anything is going to change anytime soon.

God has a word for you. It's the same word he gave a group of people when they were stuck in another country, exiled from their homeland. They'd folded their arms and said, "We're going to wait this out, and when we get home we'll start living our lives."

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God told them, "You're not going home any time soon, so start making your lives here. Plant gardens, buy homes, let your children get married, and pray for the peace and prosperity of the place where you're currently living, because by doing that, you too will be blessed with peace and prosperity."
(Jeremiah 29)

Article from Every Home for Christ.

To use a modern cliché, God was saying “Bloom where you’re planted.”

- Don’t invest your energy in hopes of leaving; instead invest your energy in the people around you. The Christian martyr Jim Elliot expressed it this way: “Wherever you are, be all there.” Don’t be physically present but mentally somewhere else. Our journey with Christ requires that we be fully present in the present.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it “this worldliness,” and said, “It is only by living completely in this world the one learns to live by faith, “This focus allows you to see that your life is centred in God and not the place you live or work, not the person you’re married to – or not married to – not how you feel or how you look.
- Investing in people around you is exactly how you find life. Jeremiah even told the exiles that God has arranged for them to be in exile. So it was God’s plan all along to push them to the edge of their existence. So they would end up centred solely on God.

Article from Every Home for Christ.

You may feel like you're in exile too, but God is still working in your life: and the message to you is:

Dig in and fully embrace the life around you.

- **Centre your life in God.**

Not in your circumstances. God is constant: your circumstances are temporary. Ask God, What do you want me to learn or to do in these present circumstances?

- **Change me God.**

Instead of asking God to change your circumstances, ask him to change you in the circumstances.

- **Practice being in the present.**

Today, whenever you find your mind drifting to another place, bring it back to the present, and ask God to help you stay in the present.

- **Determine to be a good steward of what you have.** Instead of focusing on what you don't have. Make the most of what God has given you.

God's will for Peter.

No one enjoys persecution or martyrdom unless they're suicidal.

Look at Peter.

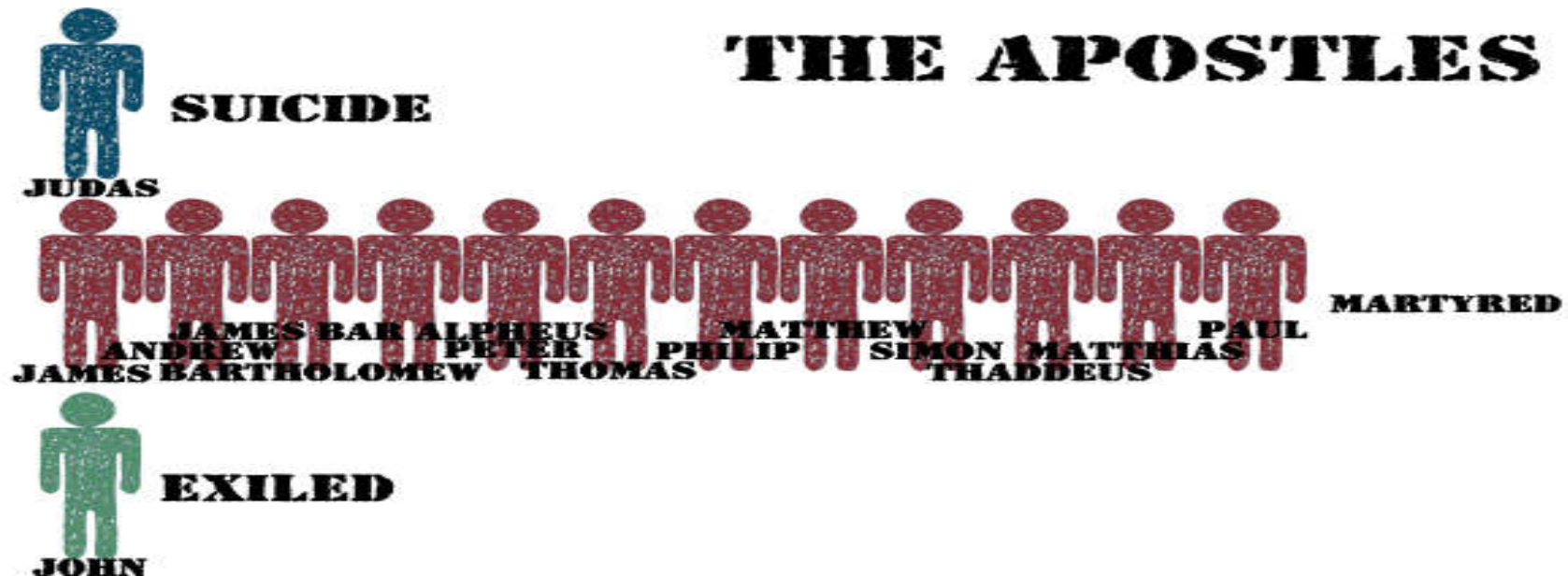
John 21:18

What I'm about to tell you is true. When you were younger, you dressed yourself. You went wherever you wanted to go.

But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands.

Someone else will dress you.

Someone else will lead you where you do not want to go.



God's will for Paul.

Acts 9:15-16.

But the Lord said to Ananias, Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.

Acts 20:22-24.

And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me.

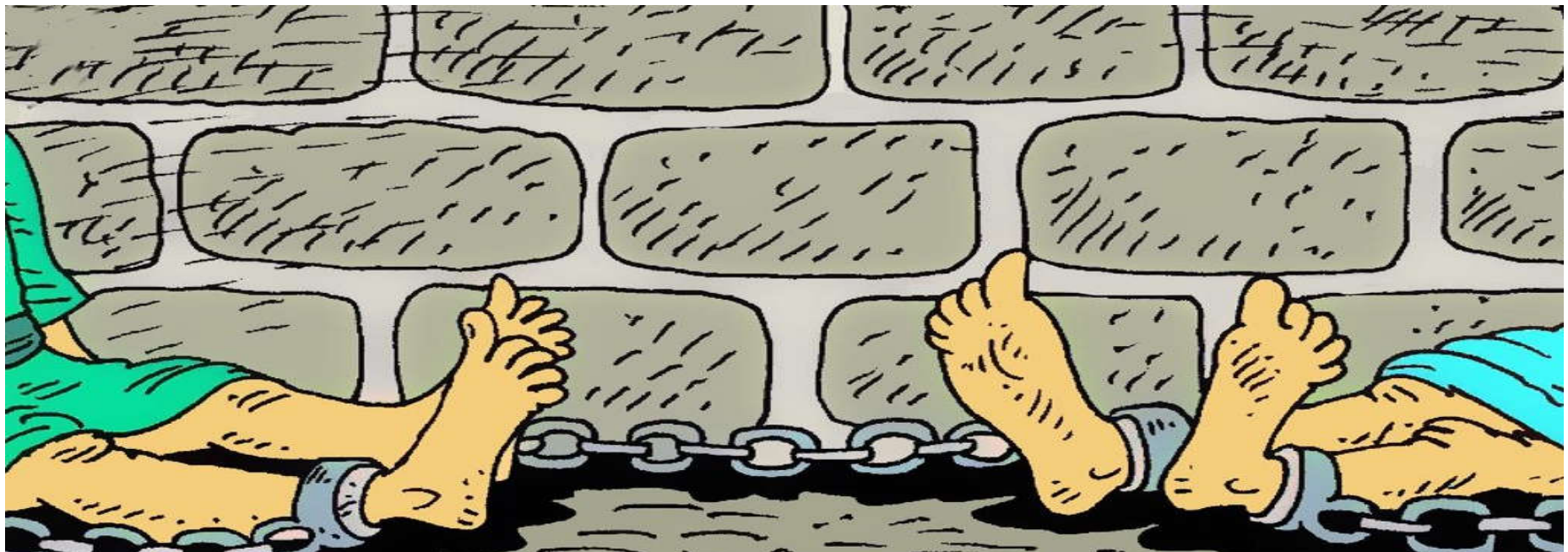


God's will for Paul.

Philippians 3:7-11

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage....

I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.



God's will for Paul.

Acts 27:21-26.

Paul stood up before them and said: Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with.

So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

How excited would you be if you were Paul and God had spared your life so that you could go Rome as a prisoner your head chopped off.



God's will for Jesus.

Isaiah 53:10. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.



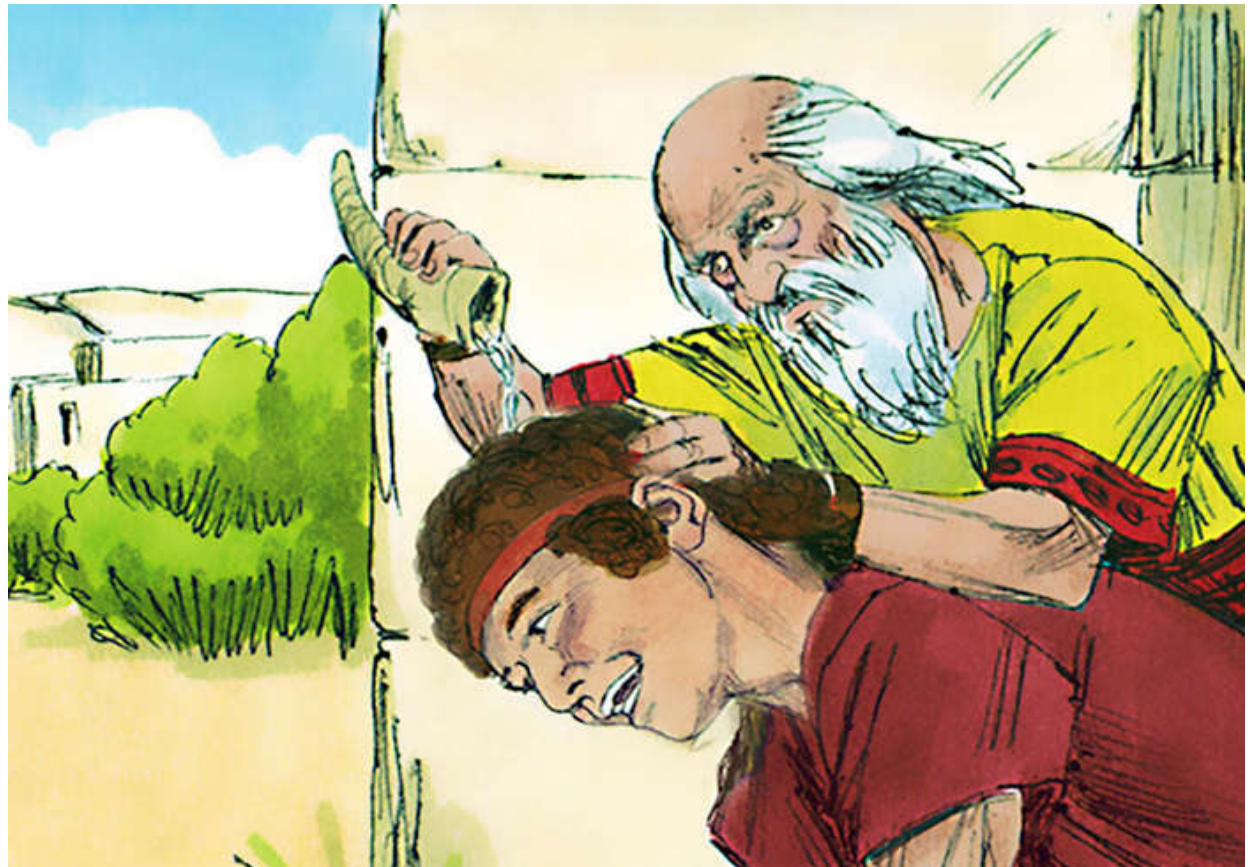
God knows where you are.

God knew where David was, he knows where you are.

God knows who you are, he knows your heart, he knows your character. You don't have to try position yourself. Be a servant, and serve to the best of your ability and leave your destiny in God's hands.

Samuel didn't know about David but God did. Jesse and his other son's did not think much of him, but God did.

David went back to tending sheep after he was anointed King, God's time would come.



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