

# Being Led through Prayer

Read [Matthew 6:9-13](#)

I once had the sad duty of ministering at a funeral for a 12-year-old boy named Nicolas. A car struck the bike he was riding and he was killed. He had been baptized a few years earlier, so I knew that he was with the Lord, but still it was a tragic, heart-breaking time for his family.

But God delivered a gracious message to the family in the midst of it all in a surprising way. It seems that Nicolas for some reason, about a week before the accident, had begun wearing his mom's jacket around. After his death, two quarters were found in the pockets of this jacket. One was dated 1982, the year of Nick's birth. The other was dated 1994, the year of his death. This may have seemed a coincidence to some, but to the family it was a profound message. They took it as a word from heaven—that God was aware of all the details of this tragedy, that their son's life was in his hand, and that somehow some good purpose would come of it. (I do not even know how to explain that!)

God is still able to communicate with his people, even in the darkest of times. One of the reasons God communicates with us is to guide us. He communicated with Nick's family to guide them through their tragedy. He communicates with all of us to guide us through the challenges and difficulties of life.

In the next line of the **Model Prayer**, in the first half of [verse 13](#), Jesus told us to pray for God's guidance:

**13a** *And lead us not into temptation*

Specifically, he was telling us to pray for guidance through "*temptation*"—for guidance to victory over sin. Generally, I believe, he was inviting us to pray for guidance in all areas of life, because all areas of life present us with choices and challenges (**i.e.**, "*temptations*").

*Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors*

**PSALM 27:11** (emphasis added)

We can ask God for guidance. Remember, Jesus would not have told us to pray a prayer that didn't work. We can ask God for guidance, and expect an answer.

But how will the guidance come? You may have noticed, when you've asked the Lord to lead you in some area of life that he's never responded with a neon sign flashing the answer in the sky. He probably hasn't sent you a text message with your answer. You've probably never heard an audible voice.

There are three basic ways God guides his people, when we ask him to. He is certainly not limited to these ways, but these are the most basic and common ways we experience his guidance. Let's look at them.

***When we ask God for guidance, he directs us through his written Word, the Bible.***

The Bible is the most authoritative form of guidance we can receive. If the Bible tell us to do one thing, and some other form of so-called guidance tells us to do something else, the Bible always trumps the other voice—be it the voice of a pastor, a church, or even an angel.

“Even an *angel?*” you might ask. Yes, even an angel, as the Apostle Paul warned in [Galatians 1:8](#): ***“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!”*** (emphasis added). Some modern cults and false religions, leading millions astray, never would have gotten started if their leaders had obeyed this verse and ignored the so-called angels who visited them with a different “gospel.”

**The written Word of God is the most authoritative form of guidance we can receive.**

Jesus said the Word of God is more reliable than the rising of the sun: ***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away”*** ([Matthew 24:35](#)). Jesus said the Word of God will judge us someday: ***“... the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day”*** ([John 12:48](#), NASU). Jesus himself received his direction from the written Word of God.

Look at his responses when the devil tempted him:

1 *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.*

2 *After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”*

4 ***Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”***

5 *Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “ ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ ”*

7 ***Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”***

8 *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”*

10 ***Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’ ”***

11 *Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*

**MATTHEW 4:2–11** (emphasis added)

Notice that Jesus responded to every temptation with a quote from the written Word of God (all from the Old Testament book **Deuteronomy**: respectively, **8:3**, **6:16**, **6:13**). He responded each time with the phrase, ***“It is written.”*** When Jesus needed guidance, the first place he looked was the Bible.

Jesus was the Son of God. He had lived for eternity in heaven. As he walked the earth, he had unbroken communication with his Heavenly Father (**John 5:20**). All the angels were at his disposal (**Matthew 26:53**). You might think he would have some secret spiritual weapon to rely on when the devil tempted him, but he relied on the same Book at your disposal!

When we ask God for guidance, the first place we should look for it is **in His Word**. We should ask, “What does the Bible say about this decision I’m facing?” God will bring to mind Scriptures we’ve read, sermons we’ve heard, or promises we’ve memorized. As we’re faithful to read our Bible daily, we’ll be surprised how often we find it addressing the very issues we’re facing. The psalmist wrote: ***“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path”*** (**Psalm 119:105**). The written Word will be our guide through this dark world.