

The Strategy of the Spirit

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: Acts 13:1-13.

B. Subject: How to know God is guiding a person.

II. A pattern for the leading of the Spirit.

A. Men were listed according to their gifts in the assembly.

B. There was present a collection of men from all walks of life.

C. God spoke to these men while they were doing the work of the ministry.

1. One does not have to get away into the wilderness to hear from God.

2. God speaks to people when they are busy exercising their gifts.

D. God chose the men, and He chose the work.

E. The men fasted out of a deep spiritual concern over what God would do.

F. The whole church was involved.

G. There is a wonderful blending between the sovereignty of God and the choice of men.

1. We must sometimes start with what we are most confident that God would want.

2. Paul and Barnabus started in the synagogue because the gospel was to start with the Jews and then go to the Greeks. This is the sovereign choice of the Spirit. (Romans 1)

3. Mark accompanied them showing human choice.

4. Man is not an automaton.

a. God is not interested in running us like robots, but guiding us at the appropriate times.

b. This makes life exciting because God is creative.

c. One cannot improve on the strategy of the Holy Spirit.

H. The encounter with Bar-Jesus.

1. He was a Christian cultist who seized upon Jesus' name in order to teach unchristian things.

2. Paul shows signs of being an apostle by judging Bar-Jesus.

Application questions:

1. How would you reconcile God's sovereignty and human choice? Explain.

2. How have you discerned God's will for you in the past? What is the lesson that this passage teaches about the place and activity for best determining His will?

3. On what things could you use the leading of the Holy Spirit? Spend some time in prayer and share these things with a close friend.
