

June 21, 2026

“Guiding Principles for Christian Living”

Leviticus 26:9-13

Intro:

Some people have the uncanny ability to always know which direction they should be going in. Perhaps you know those people... Perhaps you are one of them. These people can always point out which way is north and are always able to find their way to wherever they want to go without the use of maps or other guiding tools. My brother is one of those people. When we were kids, we would occasionally go off on a bike riding adventure through the city. Being bigger and faster, he would always be in the front. It was all I could do to keep up – forget having any capacity to pay attention to where we were or how we had gotten there. When it came time to stop for a break, I would be quite lost and convinced that we were never going to make it home again. He was never concerned about that and even though we did not retrace our path home, we always got there somehow, because he just had that ability. Of course, that was well before there was anything like Google Maps to help us out.

I think things are worse now because we do have those electronic helps on our phones. No longer do we need to pay attention to where we are going or how we are getting there. All we have to do is plug our destination into the app and mindlessly follow the instructions (“In 100 meters, turn right...”). It seems like this is a better way, but not always. Sometimes the guidance is wrong.

My ordination examination took place in Leduc, Alberta, which is south of Edmonton. I was staying with friends in St. Albert, which is more on the northish side of Edmonton (you can probably already see my directional problems), and I was supposed to pick Val up from the airport the day of the examination as she was representing the church in the process. Not really knowing my way around Edmonton, I plugged “Edmonton International Airport” into the Apple Maps app, blissfully turned that part of my brain off, and headed out thinking about the upcoming ordination and only paying attention to the direction commands from

the app. I was happily driving along in the countryside (I didn't know how the route from St. Albert to the airport should go), when all of a sudden the app happily announced that I had reached my destination. There was nothing but fields of grain all around me. No airport in sight. Eventually I got a map and proper directions and made it to the airport, although quite late. When I did, I re-entered the request for directions to the airport, which happily directed me back out to that random empty field.

My point is that we can get pretty lost pretty easily if we don't have guidance, and if that guidance isn't proper or reliable, we will still get lost.

We are coming to the end of our sermon series that has been touching on parts of our baptism preparation classes, and it ends with exploring how we live as Christians. A couple of weeks ago, we looked at how we grow as Christians, and there is a fair amount of overlap in the two lessons on growing and living. As we learn to live as a Christian, we will also grow in our faith and understanding. Likewise, if we are growing in our faith, that will be evident in the way we live as Christians. You really can't have the one without the other.

Belonging:

There are two parts to living as a Christian – how we live, and how we make decisions. This week we are focusing on our foundation for living, and next week we will look at how we make Godly decisions.

Religion says that if I do all the right things, say the right words, and follow all the right rules to the letter, then I will achieve the promised end goal. This places me in charge of my fate. Everything rests on my shoulders and my ability to game the system to my benefit. It is very individualized in its approach.

Christianity says that religiosity isn't the base foundation. Relationship is. Christianity is a relationship that is not deserved or earned by strictly following rules. Christianity rests on the foundation of a gift – the gift of Jesus, who bridges that gap of our sin that separates us from God. This is a gap that on our own we

have no hope of ever crossing. When we take on the name of Christian, our identity changes. No longer are we doomed to be lost – for we have been found by Christ. No longer are we doomed to struggle with where we fit in the world. Our identity is no longer built on our accomplishments (or lack of accomplishments), but is found in Jesus and in how much He loves and values us. No longer are we doomed to wonder where we fit in big picture of life. In Christ, we can stand confident because we know where we belong and to whom we belong. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, which we read earlier, that as Christians we now belong to God. His Spirit resides within us and it is His Spirit that guides us in how we are to live.

One of the most confusing things in human life is the area of identity – being able to confidently know who we are, what our purpose is, and how we are to live out that purpose. People try all sorts of ways to figure that out, but for Christians, the answer is found in God. We can be confident in who we are because we belong to God. We can have confidence in our value because it is based on God's love for us and not on our own successes or failures.

God's Active Role:

God is not passive in this. Because we now belong to Him, He takes an active role in our lives. The words that we read from Leviticus 26 earlier are not just political jargon that sounds nice but has no real teeth. When God says that He will be our God, He is stepping into a relationship of responsibility. He takes ownership of our growth and our successes. He opens opportunities and challenges that are for our benefit in the long run. He sets things in place to see us prosper – and when I say this, I don't mean that we are all destined to be billionaires with no cares in the world. Nowhere in the Bible does it promise that just because we are now following Jesus that we will only ever see blessing and never see challenges. The Bible teaches the opposite, in fact. God tells us that we will face challenges and what we will see as hardships and uncertainty. We will stumble and trip over temptation and sin. But God will always be present in those moments. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 says:

“If you think you are standing strong, be careful not fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.”

I have heard people say to me that a temptation was too strong, or that they had no choice, or that God had abandoned them. The promise of Scripture is that God is always present and will always provide an alternative choice. The promise is that because we belong to Him, he knows our limits and doesn't allow us to be pushed beyond them.

Conclusion:

Living as a Christian isn't about doing the right things; it is about remembering that you are loved by God, that He knows you inside and out (better than you know yourself), and that you now belong to Him. When we remember these things, we shift from following our own faulty plan for our lives to allowing God to direct our life. This is and should be the guiding principle in our lives as Christians.

Next week we will wrap this series up by exploring some guiding principles in how we then make decisions as we live as Christians.

Let's pray.