



How can I request and receive advice from God?

*Dear Andrew,**

Have you ever wondered if you could receive an answer to your personal questions from God? Yes, you can, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of counsel (Isaiah 11:2). He is the only one who can always give us the right answer to all of our questions. God is the only one who can always lead you on the right path (Psalm 23:3). He helps us because He loves us very much.

First, we want to look at a biblical example. Then I will share how I learned to ask God for advice. And lastly, I will show how you can put this into practice.

Part 1: Biblical Example

We will read some verses from 1 Samuel 23:1-13 (NKJV):

1 *“When David was told, ‘Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors.’”* The Philistines had attacked an Israelite city and stolen their grain harvest.

2 *“He inquired of the LORD, saying, ‘Shall I go and attack these Philistines?’ The LORD answered him, ‘Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.’”*

David needed advice, because he didn’t know what he should do. On the one hand, he felt responsible for the protection of his people. But should he really fight against the Philistines with his small army? He asked God and received the answer: “Yes, attack them! You will win.”

At that time, David was hiding with a few guerrilla fighters in the wilderness, because King Saul wanted to kill him. His men argued: “Do you want fight a war on two fronts?”

3 *“But David’s men said to him, ‘Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!’”*

What did David do? Should he drop the plan? Did he become uncertain?

Or did he begin to argue with his troop?

* Andrew according to the biblical Andrew in John 1:41-42.

4 **“Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, ‘Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand.’”**

The wonderful thing is that when we are unsure, we may ask our God for a second answer. We are strong, when we know for certain what God wants in this situation. David’s men go with him without any further objections after their leader asked God a second time for advice. We can assume that God’s answer completely convinced David. And this made his men certain and they all agreed with him. There is no indication that David had to appeal to his men to follow God’s answer.

5 **“So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah.”**

It came to pass just as God had prophesied to David.

7-8 **“Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, ‘God has delivered him into my hands, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars.’ And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.”**

Saul thought: “God has given him into my hands.” Saul considered what he wanted to be God’s will. A blatant misconception! Don’t act like Saul!

David learned from a messenger that Saul and his troops were on their way to Keila – that he wants to surround the city and take him captive. What did David do? He asks God again.

10-13 **“David said, ‘LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. 11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant.’**

And the LORD said, ‘He will.’ 12 Again David asked, ‘Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?’ And the LORD said, ‘They will.’

13 **So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.”**

Saul was on his way to Keila. David heard about it. God confirmed that Saul was coming and that the people of Keila would hand him over. As a result, he leaves the city and hides somewhere else. Saul learns this and changes his plan: he gave up on the campaign.

David learned from our wonderful God what would happen if he didn’t leave Keila.

Would you like to be counseled by God? This is another way we can experience God’s love.

Part 2: From an Authorized Officer to Pastor

I would like to briefly share how I learned to ask God for advice.

In the spring of 1964 the idea came to me to spend a year abroad in England. I wanted to study English and take a few Bible classes at Newbold College. At that time, I worked for a logistics and transport company and when I asked my boss if he could give me a year off, he firmly rejected the idea.

Hearing God's Voice

A few months later I read the book *"Vom Beten"* (*About prayer*, Hallesby, Brockhaus) while on summer vacation. The author compared our prayers to the behavior of a person, who goes to the doctor and tells him his problems, but then leaves without letting the doctor examine him or giving him a chance to help. While taking a walk with a friend, who was also vacationing there, I shared what I was reading. I made the conclusion: "We should give God the chance to speak to us." My friend, a pastor, replied: "Yes, of course."

I asked him: "Has God ever spoken to you?" He responded: "Naturally." I asked: "How do you hear Him?" He answered: "You can't hear it with your ears, but rather with your mind, like listening to your conscience." Then it occurred to me that I could ask God if I should go to England.

The next morning, I asked God during my prayer time if I should spend a year abroad in England or not.

Afterwards I remained quiet and suddenly had the impression that God told me: "Go to England." But shortly after my prayer, I was unsure if this was God's answer or only my wishful thinking. So, the next morning I brought the matter before God again. In the silence I received the answer again: "Go to England." Nevertheless, I was still unsure. And at the same time, I realized that I definitely had to go to England if that was what God wanted. That would mean that I would have to resign from my good position, if my boss stuck to his no. So, on the third morning I prayed again: "Father, please don't be angry with me because I am asking You for an answer again. You know that I don't have any experience yet with listening for Your voice. Furthermore, I might have to quit my job. In addition, my wife, Ingrid, would be alone with our son for nine months. Therefore, I ask you to tell me again. Moreover, while I am reading my chapter in the Bible today, I ask You to help me find confirmation there. And in addition, I ask You to show Ingrid separately if I should go to England or not. She should voluntarily tell me."

In the silence God told me for the third time: "Go to England." Then I read my chapter in the Bible for the day: John 15. In verse 14 it says: *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."* (NKJV) I immediately realized: This is the confirmation from God. After my worship, my wife spoke with me and said: "Do you have an answer about England yet? I am sure that you should go to England." On that day, the Lord answered all three of my requests and gave me clarity.

When we got back home from vacation, we visited my dear mother. I told her: “While on vacation I thought some more about going to England.” She interrupted me and said: “Yes, I know that you are going to England.” I asked her: “How did you know?” She responded: I prayed about it. My dear mother knew that we could ask God what His will is in specific situations. But she had never spoken to me about it.

God can do miracles when we listen to His voice. Please observe how God led me in this matter.

Answers to Prayer

We prayed together as a family that my boss would give me nine months of unpaid vacation for my time in England, without my having to quit my job. So, I reported to my boss the next morning after vacation and after a short general conversation, I presented my request. I asked for nine months of unpaid vacation in the next year so that I could study in England. He approved my proposal on the spot. Later, he regretted his decision and tried to talk me out of it, nevertheless he kept his word. Following this, we went on a business trip together. My boss revealed to me that he had raised my salary. The additional amount covered the complete cost of my studies in Newbold College.

A few years previously I had established a business relation, which had brought our company large profits. Now, another branch in our group was supposed to take over this business, even though this branch had done nothing for this project. Then I thought this branch could pay me DM 500 a month as long as I was studying in England.

Hence, I asked God if I should ask for a DM 500 monthly salary during my time in England. During the next three days I received no answer from God. So, I decided not to ask my boss for the money and left it up to God. I told my wife: “I will not ask for the money; if God wants us to have the money, He can give it to us without me asking.”

Two days later my boss informed me: “I have some good news for you. While you are in England, you will continue to receive a DM 500 salary per month.” We were amazed and thanked God. In addition, I received a DM 500 Christmas bonus.

Years earlier, two doctors had told my wife that she wouldn't be able to have any more children. But after 10 years she was suddenly pregnant again. Under these circumstances, I wanted to call off my studies in England. But my wife said: “We prayed about it. The dear Lord knew back then that I would get pregnant. Therefore, you should go to England as planned. The Lord will also take care of me during this time.” We figured out that my wife would be five months pregnant when I left and

that she was due on December 21 and that I could come home for Christmas vacation during that time. So, we went ahead with our plan and at the end of August 1965 I rode the night express train from Brussels via Ostend and Dover to London.

When I woke up the next morning on the train, I saw a young man in the corridor in front of my compartment window sitting on his suitcase and sleeping. He had fine, noble features. Suddenly, I noticed a tag on his suitcase with his destination: Newbold College, Bracknell, England. We were going to the same place! So, I introduced myself to him. He was Dutch and he was studying theology at our English college. He spoke fluent English and he knew the way. So, I had a traveling companion and a travel guide through London. This was very helpful, since we arrived in the East of the metropolis and had to find out way through the city to the train station in the West.

Surrender

At the mission school Erik and I became friends. He was a pastor and the youth secretary of the Swedish Union. One Friday afternoon Erik was playing soccer with some younger students. While he was running he collapsed and died on the spot. I was very sad. Almost immediately after hearing the news, a question came to my mind: "Who will the Lord call to preach the gospel in his place?" A few hours later another question surfaced: "And if God were to call me?" That was it for me. No way did I want to become a pastor. I was an enthusiastic businessman, had a very interesting job,

was greatly appreciated by my company and lived in a beautiful region of Germany.

The question greatly troubled me. I told God: "Not everyone has to become a pastor. I earn a lot of money and I could pay for the pastoral training of a young man. And I work with the church as well and I can become even more involved." This went on for a whole week. I fought with God morning, noon and night. On Friday evening as I knelt by my bed, I was completely helpless. I didn't know what I should do until a quiet thought entered my mind:

"God loves you! He also loves your wife, your son and the unborn baby. He won't call you to be a pastor and then permit your family to be unhappy. And if He should call you, then He will give you the necessary talents for this ministry. Since God loves you He will lead you in the best possible way."

A few moments later I said to God: "Father in heaven, I believe in Your love, omniscience and omnipotence. Unfortunately, I have to say that I don't want to be a pastor. But if You should want it, then I am ready. From now on I want to do Your will in all things. But as far as I am concerned I don't want to be a pastor, so I will not tell anyone about my willingness. If You want me, then You will call me, because You are all-powerful."

After this prayer I was at peace.

Delayed Birth

Then a new problem came up in Newbold. When I looked at my examination dates, I was thunderstruck. They were scheduled for December 21. That was the day our child was supposed to be born. What should I do now? I prayed and deliberated back and forth. Then I said to myself: "I am here, because the Lord wanted me here. I will pray that the Lord delays the birth until I am back home after I have taken my exams." I shared this with my wife. When she received my letter, she prayed: "Dear God, please help that the baby is born a week earlier so that I am at home when Helmut comes." Can we embarrass our dear God?

So, on December 21 I took my exams in England and then immediately left by train. I arrived on December 22 in the evening in Wangen im Allgäu. My wife was still as round as a watermelon. We were happy about God's guidance and spent a nice evening together with our son Jürgen. After breakfast on December 23 my wife said: "It's time. Take me to the hospital." During the course of the morning our son Claus was born. He was healthy and the birth was without any complications.

God's Call

I completed my studies in Newbold College in the early summer of 1966 and then resumed work at my company. A year later we drove to Munich for a meeting of our church for

southern Bavaria. In the entrance hall I met the president of the conference, Karl Köhler. He wanted to speak to me for a moment. I immediately knew what was coming.

Brother Köhler said: "During World War II we were not able to train any pastors. Now, several pastors have died and we currently have many vacancies. That is why we want to call some dedicated church members directly to pastoral ministry. We have come to the conclusion that you could be one of these brothers." I thanked him for their faith in me and asked for some time to think it over.

My wife and I decided to fast and pray about the matter for four weeks. We wanted to know from God if this was His call for us or if we should help out in a merely human plight. We both received assurance that this was God's call. So, in 1968 at the age of 38 I became a pastor.

Experience finding an apartment in Regensburg

To God's glory and for your encouragement I want to share one more of my many experiences. In May 1968 we were informed that we should begin our ministry on September 1 in Regensburg. We immediately drove to Regensburg and started looking for an apartment. We found a newly built apartment, but it was already rented out. But the people from the construction company thought the apartment would definitely be available, since the renters hadn't paid their rent and the case had already gone to court.

Ingrid and I prayed and asked if we should wait for this apartment. God's answer was "wait". So, we waited a few months. Even our Christian relatives couldn't understand how we could just wait. We contacted the construction company again and received the answer: "The apartment will definitely be available and if it shouldn't, then they would give us their sample apartment." We prayed again. God's answer: "wait". So, we waited until five days before our moving date. Then a letter came from the construction company: They regret that they cannot keep their promise, but they can give us neither the apartment we wanted nor the sample apartment.

We immediately drove to Regensburg and found a wonderful apartment in a beautiful residential area with stunning views and a swimming pool on the hill behind the building. When the landlord heard that I was the pastor of the Adventist church, he lowered our rent, because his closest associate was an Adventist. The apartment had well-designed rooms, a large garage and basement. We could move in on the scheduled date. Eight months after we started, we held a large evangelistic series with an evangelist from the USA. We were able to store many equipment pieces in our garage. We can depend on our heavenly Father. This apartment was much better than the original one!

Important Realization

When I was 17 years old I made the decision to be baptized during a sermon. I was convinced that the Seventh-Day-Adventist Church taught the truth and that it is God's church for the

last days. 19 years later, through my experience in England, I realized that I had only accepted the general teachings of God's Word. I hadn't accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord. Up to that point, I had controlled my life and prayed that God would bless it. My resolution to accept Jesus as my Lord and to follow Him in everything in November 1965 had a positive impact on my whole life. I am only sorry that as a result I had lost 19 valuable years.

Don't we have a wonderful God? A song says: You can trust Him in the darkest night. And another: It is so marvelous to trust in Jesus.

Part 3: Praying for God's will in my personal decisions – how do I do that?

I do it this way: I thank our Father with my whole heart that the Holy Spirit is the "*Spirit of counsel and might*" (Isaiah 11:2 NKJV), who can give us the right counsel in every circumstance in life. And I want to praise and thank Him for that.

An important piece of advice: I believe that the promises in the Bible normally only apply to God's children, who are born again and live a life of complete surrender to Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Everyone else potentially runs into the danger of being misled by other influences while trying to listen to God.

Furthermore, God will only give us advice, when we are prepared in advance to do what He will tell us and when we allow no deliberate and known sins in our lives.

When I pray for our wonderful God to show me His will, then I claim two promises as follows.

Psalms 32:8 NKJV: *“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go ...”* and

James 1:5 NKJV: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”*

Additional Bible Texts for this:

“He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.” (John 8:47 NKJV)

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” (John 10:27 NKJV)

“Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” (John 18:37b NKJV)

“Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.” (Isaiah 30:21 NKJV)

All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies... Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.” (Psalms 25:10,12 NKJV)

Before I quietly pray for God’s answer, I ask Him to block every personal wish and desire while I am listening for His voice. In addition,

I ask Him to block every influence from the outside, so that I can only hear His voice.

I claim Jesus’ promise in John 10:27 NKJV: *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*

I formulate my question to God in such a way that He can answer me with one or two words. God could tell us more, but I know how hard of hearing we are.

An example: “Father, is it your will that I travel to Romania or not?” When I receive the answer: “travel” or something similar, then I ask the Lord to tell me if I should go now or at a later time. Then the Lord can answer with one word. Despite Corona I was able to travel to Romania without any difficulties in 2020 and 2021. (You can read about my experience in 2020 in www.missionsbrief.de – Missionsbrief 54, p. 7 in German)

As long as my dear wife lived, we brought all our family decisions together before God. We agreed on what question we wanted bring to the Lord. Then we prayed alone in different rooms. We only shared the answer we received, when both of us had an answer. It was essential for us to receive the same answer, even if the wording was different, it had to have the same meaning. When God gave us no answer, then we concluded that we shouldn’t do anything.

In general, God’s answers aren’t something we hear with our ears, but rather more through the voice of our conscience. It is an inner conviction, a strong impression.

When I first started to pray for God's will, I often had a pen and paper ready in case I was distracted by other thoughts. I wrote the other thoughts down, so that I could concentrate on God again.

Whoever has not done this before, shouldn't start with major decisions, but rather start practicing with an easier question: "Father, will it honor You and be good for me to read this book now?" We have a wonderful God, who gives us advice. God is delighted to turn His whole love towards us. When we follow His will, then we can completely trust that we will receive the answer at the right time – nevertheless, it could be at the last minute.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV) God invites us to ask Him for advice: "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*"

Ellen White comments:

"We must hear God speak to each and every one of us, and when every other voice is silent and we wait quietly for him, the voice of God will become audible to us through being quiet. He says: be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10). (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 363.3)

Don't do what Joshua and the elders did. They thought they could correctly access the situation and were taken in by the cunning plot of the Gibeonites. Joshua 9:14 (NKJV) tell us why: "... *but they did not ask counsel of the LORD.*" It makes a big difference whether we *think* we know God's will or whether we ask God what His will is.

And don't do what Saul did. "*So Saul said, 'God has delivered him into my hand' ...*" (1 Samuel 23:7-8 NKJV). He thought his own evil desire was the will of God.

Do you also want to be advised by God? I can only say to everyone: This is another wonderful way we can experience God's love and make valuable experiences. May God give you His grace.

Dear Andrew,

I hope the following questions will help you think about this.

Are you in the place God's wants you to be?

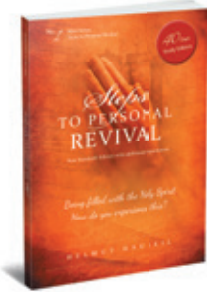
Are you willing to do God's will in every aspect of your life?

Are there certain insights in God's Word, which you reject?

Your answer to these questions show if you completely trust Jesus and if Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life. When Jesus isn't your Lord, then in reality you aren't a Christian. Then you don't have an abundant life and you need a revival. The Lord wants to give it to you. I hope that knowing that you can ask God for advice will be a great blessing to you.

With best wishes,

Helmut



BOOK 1: STEPS TO PERSONAL REVIVAL

Being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Our lord himself has given the command:¹ Let yourselves be consistently and repeatedly filled anew with the spirit!²

1 Ellen G. White, *Mount of Blessing*, MB 20.3 (egwwritings.org)

2 Johannes Mager, *Auf den Spuren des Heiligen Geistes* (Lüneburg, 1999), p. 101

www.steps-to-personal-revival.info

FOREWORD FOR LEADERS AND FUTURE LEADERS MULTIPLYING THE RESULTS

CHAPTER 1: JESUS' MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

What did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit?

Are you acquainted with Jesus' most powerful message?

CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS THE CENTER OF OUR PROBLEMS?

Is there a spiritual cause to our problems? Is the cause a lack of the Holy Spirit?

What is the main problem with being a carnal Christian?

CHAPTER 3: OUR PROBLEMS ARE SOLVABLE

What is God's solution for our problems? How can we grow to be happy and strong Christians? What is the relationship between baptism and the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 4: WHAT DIFFERENCES CAN WE EXPECT?

What advantage do we have with a life filled with the Holy Spirit?

What do we lose when we don't pray for the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 5: THE KEY TO PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

How can I implement and experience God's solution for me?

How should I pray so that I am sure of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER 6: WHAT EXPERIENCES LIE AHEAD OF US?

Personal experiences, as well as experiences from churches, a conference and a union

CHAPTER 7: INTEREST AND SHARING

The Joy that we give returns to our own hearts. (German Proverb)

How can I help others to experience "Life in Abundance"?

How do we pass on the message? Which ways are there?

Read
more



BOOK 2: STEPS TO PERSONAL REVIVAL

ABIDE IN JESUS – HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

“Abide in Me, and I in you.” Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service.

Ellen G. White (*Desire of Ages, DA, p.676.2*)

www.steps-to-personal-revival.info

Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as a condition in order to enjoy His salvation. Rather it is our consent to let Him do everything for us, in us, and through us. It is a work He does for us – the result and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust, and to wait for Him to accomplish what He has promised. (Andrew Murray)

CHAPTER 1: JESUS’ MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

Are you acquainted with Jesus’ most powerful message?

What functions does the Holy Spirit have?

How can our character be changed?

Jesus on the Holy Spirit in the Parable. About the Leaven

CHAPTER 2: SURRENDER TO JESUS

Do I lose my own will? Or will I become stronger? What can prevent us from surrendering?

Does surrender to God mean that we have to give up our own will?

CHAPTER 3: JESUS ABIDING IN YOU

What effects does “Christ in me” have on my life?

The ultimate achievement: being imbued with the fullness of God.

The Effects of “Christ in you”. How do we get deliverance from the power of sin?

Will we become “carnal” again by sinning?

CHAPTER 4: OBEDIENCE THROUGH JESUS?

How can I live in joyful obedience? What is joy? How does obedience through “Jesus in me” work?

God has designed: Collaboration between God and Man.

CHAPTER 5: ATTRACTIVE FAITH THROUGH JESUS

How can oneness be achieved among believers?

What makes our faith appealing to our family and the world?

What changes in us make us witnesses? How does revival generate mission?

