

## When You Don't Know What To Do



David Wilkerson March 1, 1979

What would you think if our president, addressing the nation on network TV, confessed — "We really don't know what to do! Your leaders are confused, and we have no sense of direction." That would be some kind of speech. The nation would be convulsed with ridicule and scorn for him and all his associates.

But that is exactly what King Jehoshaphat did. Three enemy armies were closing in on Judah, and this mighty leader had called the nation together at Jerusalem to formulate a war plan. He needed plans, a decisive declaration of action. Something had to be done immediately. Instead, Jehoshaphat stood before his people and poured his heart out to God in confession, "O Lord God, they come to cast us out of our possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our Lord, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; we do not know what we should do, but our eyes are fixed upon thee" (2 Chronicles 20:11–12).

What kind of plan is this? No program, no committee action. No flying banners, no bright and shiny war machinery, no brilliant war plans, no blaring of trumpets or mustering of patriotic armies. Just a simple confession — "We are in this over our heads — we don't know what to do — so we will just keep our eyes on the Lord." They decided to stand still, admit their confusion, and put all their eggs in one basket. They would not move anywhere but closer to their Lord — look no other place for help but to Him.

Does it sound cowardly and ridiculous? Well-armed enemy troops surround them, and vultures fill the skies, waiting for the battle to begin — while they just stand together, praising God, admitting they don't know what to do next — and looking only to Him for deliverance.

Nowadays, when we get into trouble, we act as if we are saying, "Lord, I love you, but I already know what I'm going to do." When the enemy comes in like a flood, we panic. We feel we must do something — make something move or give. We have a need to see things happen, and we feel guilty if we are not constantly proving to God how willing we are to "do anything He requires of us."

The Urge To "Make Things Happen" Comes To Us All

1. A divorced mother worries about her little boy's insecurity since dad left the home. The child won't let mother out of his sight. He screams and calls for his daddy. All the love mother showers on him doesn't seem to be enough. What did this Christian mother do? She called her friends for advice; she researched books on child raising, looking for solutions; she went about her day in worrisome concern, thinking to herself, "I've just got to do something about this problem before it gets out of hand."

But there is a better way. It's absolutely Scriptural for that mother to throw up her hands and cry, "It's too much for me; I've tried my best; I don't know who to turn to or what to do! No one can help me — so I'll just stay close to Jesus, keep my eyes only on Him — and trust that He will see me through."

2. A perplexed couple is on the verge of giving up. They so much wanted to give 100% to Jesus, but they have been exposed to legalistic preaching of fear that has brought them under bondage. They got swept up into the Charismatic Movement, hoping to find joy and fulfillment. But one preacher warned them, "Jesus says you must be perfect. He would never ask us to do something we couldn't do. To say you must sin a little each day is a cop-out."

Another added, "Delayed obedience is disobedience. Any disobedience can damn you." Now they worry about all the things they forgot to do, about their imperfections and daily battles with the flesh — and they feel defeated.

Recently they picked up an evangelist's newsletter that warned, "On Judgment Day, there will be many Christians who have been to church three times a week, prayed in tongues, given prophecies, taught Sunday School and served as deacons — who will not be allowed into Heaven because they have not read their Bible enough and prayed enough. God is angry with people who sin — every day. He is determined to punish them eternally. There is no hope unless they stop sinning completely." Now they also worry about having prayed, given and read their Bibles enough to please God.

They live in constant fear. They have been told various things about their fear — some claiming a "demon of fear" had crept into them. Others told them they were guilty of a "wrong confession" — and they were urged "not to accept that fear." Just "confess victory," they were told — and all would be well.

The wife said, "We have become so miserable in our efforts to clean ourselves up for God. Every night we evaluate our day and always feel God is displeased because we, somehow, failed to behave right, confess right or do right. We promise to do better tomorrow. But these are the things that make us want to give up and quit trying. We've lost our sense of peace and security. This is not the abundant life — it is fear. Does not the Cross of Jesus mean more than that?"

What should they do? They wonder now who is right — the Charismatics or the Baptists? Their faith is shaken, and they have lost their sense of direction. Which teacher is right? They all seem to have such good arguments and plenty of Scripture to prove their point. What is holiness — what does God expect? Does God do it all for me at the Cross — or do I have to muster up my own strength and work out my own salvation with fear and trembling? It's very confusing!

My Answer: Admit your confusion — don't seek out pat answers to all these questions. Don't run around looking for teachers to give you solutions and answers. You don't know what to do or where to go? Good! Very good! Now you are ready to do it God's way. Now you can say with Paul, "I've decided to know nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified." Quit looking to these preachers and teachers — go yourself to the Lord! Get your eyes on Him and with Jehoshaphat, cry loud, "My eyes are fixed on you!"

3. A couple in Iowa are trying to save their marriage. They've been married for fifteen years, and the last five have been unbearable. Both have skeletons in their closets — both have been guilty of taking their vows lightly. He cheated and she "almost did." For five years, they have tried to forgive one another. But the marriage is not fulfilling now. They pledge their love to each other — but each of them knows something is wrong. They can't put their finger on it. They are lonely, even when together. They are not reaching each other, and the harder they try, the more frustrated they become. They'll have a good week, when everything seems to be patched up and going well. Then, suddenly, it all breaks down and silent anger and resentment take over. She cries herself to sleep — he thinks of giving up. In a way, they are still attracted to each other — in another way, they seem to be allergic to each other. They have tried to talk their problems through: They've made promises they couldn't keep; they've read books seeking help; they've been to a marriage counselor. But nothing brings about an honest solution. They have both reached a place where there is no turning back. They simply do not know what to do or where to go for help!

Is there any solution? I think so. All marriages — even good ones — have their periods of stress. But some marriages can't be healed at all — outside of a genuine miracle. When two people have tried everything — when it dawns on them there is no place to go for help — when confusion and panic take over — that is when God has to intervene. Once again — all you can do in such a crisis is do as King Jehoshaphat. Don't be afraid of your confusion. You aren't the only one up against the wall. God specializes in "hopeless" cases. God takes over when we give up trying to work it all out ourselves. This couple, with a marriage about to hit the rocks, must stop looking for help outside of the Lord. They must commit their problems and lives over to the Lord and pray, "God, it's over our heads. We've tried and failed. It looks hopeless — so we'll just stand in Your presence, looking only to You for help. It's You, Lord — or nothing. Our eyes will stay fixed on You."

4. Reader — you, too, face crises in which you don't know what to do — or where to go for help! Is it a financial crisis staring you right in the face? Do you live in a home situation that tears your spirit apart? Have your children hurt you — has a child brought anguish to you? Has sickness or pain brought you down to the valley of death? Have you lost a job? Is your future scary and uncertain? Is your marriage in trouble? Has the death of a loved one left you depressed, lonely and empty? Has a divorce left you felling like a rejected failure?

Do you — right now — feel overwhelmed? Have you tried so many ways to see it through, yet nothing seems to help? Have you grown tired of trying? Have you reached the end of your rope? Have you said to your heart, "I don't know what to do now!"?

We are living in a time when everything is getting shaky and insecure — and almost everybody is hurting in one way or another.

Hardly anybody knows what to do anymore. Our leaders don't have the foggiest idea of what is happening to this world — or to the economy. The future is anybody's guess.

The business world is even more confused — with economists arguing with each other about what is coming. There is not a single businessman or economist in the world today who knows for certain where we are headed.

Psychologists and psychiatrists are baffled by the changing forces affecting people today. They watch the breakup of homes and marriages — as confused as the rest of us as to why it is happening. Their reasons all contradict each other.

It can even be confusing for Christians nowadays. Ministers admonish us to face our problems by "looking into the Bible yourself — finding the answer." But the Bible doesn't always specify — "This you must do!" There is not always a direct answer for your specific problem. At times, unless the Spirit gives you a special revelation, you can get confused by verses that seem, on the surface, to be contradictory. At one place you read, "Sell all you have and give to the poor." Then you read, "If a man neglect his own house, he is worse than an infidel and has denied the faith." If you sold all and gave it away to the poor, how could you have any left to provide well for your own?

Believe it or not, even the greatest saints who ever lived never did fully understand the battle between the flesh and the Spirit. Why all these different denominations? Why all the fighting over doctrine? Why so many disputes over baptisms, doctrines and morals? Simply because men today are still in darkness about so many things. We all eventually reach a place like King Jehoshaphat did. The enemy comes against us all. Some put on a big front, as though they have no fears, no questions, no problems, but they are the ones who, inwardly, fight the worst battles. Often, those who judge everybody else and who appear so holy and righteous before others are waging a war with lust deep inside them.

Yes — we are all hurting in one way or another! We are all in need! We all reach that point of panic when the heart cries out, "What do I do now?"

Some people think I shouldn't confess that I, too, have battles. But I do get spiritually dry at times. I get plunged into darkness and confusion on occasion. With Joseph, I can confess, "The Word tries me!" But I am no better or worse than any reader of this message. Billy Graham is in the same boat. The saintliest of people hurt, too. I know what King Jehoshaphat was going through. I've been there — when, I too, had to cry aloud, "I don't know what to do — so I'll keep my eyes fixed on Him!"

You don't fold your hands — sitting around at ease — letting God do it all!

That is not what it means to keep your eyes "fixed on the Lord." We look to the Lord, not as people who know what to do, but as people who don't know at all what they must do. But we do know that He is the King who sits on the flood. He is Lord of all, and we know that even if the world breaks in two — if it all falls apart — He is a Rock of certainty. Our eyes are fixed on a risen Lord. If we do not know what to do, our faith assures us He knows what to do.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian, pictured the Christian like someone trying to cross a sea of floating pieces of ice. This Christian cannot rest anywhere while crossing, except in his faith that God will see him through. He cannot stand anywhere too long, or otherwise he sinks. After having taken a step, he must watch out for the next. Beneath him is the abyss and before him is uncertainty — but always ahead is the Lord — firm and sure! He doesn't see the land yet, but it is there — a promise in his heart. So the Christian traveler keeps his eyes fixed upon his final place!

I prefer to think of life as a wilderness journey — like that of the children of Israel. And King Jehoshaphat's battle, along with all the children of Judah, is also our battle. Sure it's a wilderness; yes, there are snakes, dry water holes,

valleys of tears, enemy armies, hot sands, drought, impassable mountains. But when the children of the Lord stood still to see His salvation, He spread a table in that wilderness — rained manna from above — destroyed enemy armies by His power alone — brought water out of rocks — took the poison out of the snakebites — led them by pillar and cloud — gave them milk and honey — and brought them into the promised land with a high and mighty hand. And God warned them to tell every following generation: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6).

A reporter asked me to respond to a question about pressures on the church from the IRS and other government agencies. "Isn't the IRS trying to tax all evangelical ministries? Won't that day come when the government will strangle missionary and evangelical outreaches? What will you do then, seeing these things are already in the works?"

I replied: "We are going to be forced right back into doing the work of Jesus the way He did it Himself. The day will probably come when I and all my minister friends will have to quit doing evangelism like big business and get back to New Testament methods. We will be priced out of expensive methods and have to go back to walking the streets with sinners, like Jesus did. but as long as our eyes are focused on Jesus, no one will ever stop His message from being preached."

That Is Why Jesus Said, "I Am The Way!" (John 14:6)

Stop searching! Stop looking in the wrong direction for help. Get alone with Jesus in a secret place; tell Him all about your confusion. Tell Him you have no other place to go. Tell Him you trust Him alone to see you through. You will be tempted to take matters into your own hand. You will want to figure things out on your own. You will wonder if God is working at all — there will be no sign of things changing. Your faith will be tested to the limit. But nothing else works anyhow — there is nothing to lose. Peter summed it all up — "To whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life?" (John 6:68).

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:2).

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: For I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22).

"Ye that seek the Lord: Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn..." (Isaiah 51:1).

"Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me" (Micah 7:7).

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord" (Psalm 112:7).

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50:10).

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