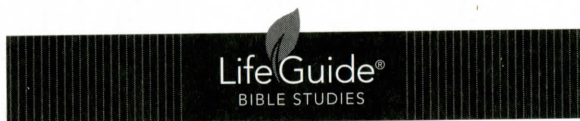


DECISIONS

Seeking God's Guidance

9 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS



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1

Why Is God Silent?

Isaiah 58

An enemy of Joan of Arc once mocked her by jeering, “She says she hears God’s voice; why don’t I hear his voice?” It is reported that Joan replied, “Don’t you wish you did?”

GROUP DISCUSSION. If you could ask God one question and be assured of an answer, what would it be?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Why have you begun a Bible study on making decisions? Begin by praying that God will lead you in the decision you are facing.

In the year 537 B.C., Cyrus, King of Persia, allowed a small number of his Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem for the purpose of rebuilding the temple. The foundation for the new temple was quickly laid, but then the political situation became uncertain, circumstances interrupted, and economic troubles became so severe that the operation was discontinued. Isaiah 58 is a message for these confused and off-track people. *Read Isaiah 58.*

1. What frustrations do the people feel with God?

2. When have you felt a similar frustration with him?

3. What have the people done to try to gain God's guidance?

4. In what similar ways do people attempt to discover God's will today?

5. Why does God declare the people rebellious (v. 1)?

6. If the people's fasting was sincere, how would it have been different?

7. What is the connection between receiving God's guidance and a concern for justice?

8. What promises does God make in verses 8-14?

9. What are the requirements for receiving these promises?

10. Why might God be withholding his light from us as a nation?

from you as an individual?

11. What have you learned from this passage that will help you to discover God's will?

Take time to confess your lack of sincerity and to ask for God's light to break forth.

Now or Later

The letter to the Ephesians explains why many people have become ignorant of and separated from God. *Read Ephesians 4:17—5:21.*

What are the results of doing things our own way?

What behaviors are to characterize our new life as Christians?

Which of the commands in these verses are the most difficult for you to keep?

How will keeping these commands help you to hear the voice of God?