



Lord, Show Us the Way!

By Pastor Haywood A. Robinson, III

At the end of three days the officers went through the camp and commanded the people, “As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.” Joshua 3:2-4 (ESV)



K.I.S.S. For decades, it's been an acronym used by coaches, teachers, parents, managers and other influential people in the world. Keep It Simple, Stupid. A bit harsh, I'd say. We are pretty adept at complicating the simple, aren't we? This admonition is issued to encourage the listener to be as clear, concise and complete as possible when communicating with others.

Created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26a), human beings share some of God's attributes, albeit to a lesser degree. These include intelligence, knowledge, ingenuity, judgment, independence and will. By their very nature, these qualities are good. Left to our sole oversight and usage, they can lead to some frightening outcomes. These words from Joshua, along with many throughout the Bible, remind us of one simple, but, important truth. We're not left alone to employ these God-given traits in framing our futures.

Among life's most simple truths is this: We need God. If we're not careful, though, our education, explorations, expectations, and our societal and technological evolutions can overshadow, overcast or even overrule this most salient truth. Granted, we have utilized our imaginative and innovative abilities to make some rather incredible advances. For far too many people, unfortunately, such successes have come at a high expense, e.g. the erosion or eclipse of the “child-like” faith in God, needed to manage the complications these very achievements sprout.

Research, relationships, and resources are blessings from God, but are paltry substitutes for God. Not only is the flood of electromagnetic energy filling our atmosphere from computers, mobile devices, satellites, etc., having a detrimental impact on our health, the over-crowded information superhighway is having a detrimental impact on our faith. If we're not careful, we'll find ourselves looking to Google, Alexa, Siri or Wikipedia for answers to life's questions rather than God. Furthermore, we can become predisposed to expect God's reply at the speed of light, and if not, move out on our own.

The simple truth is, ... We Need God. Here are some hard statements to accept: You don't know where you're going. You might know where you want to go. You might know where you plan to go. Many are so preoccupied with where they want to get to next that they don't even know where they are now. Only God knows. His plan for your life and mine never has changed. He says, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jer. 29:11). He has a destination and destiny in mind. Trust Him!

This is Joshua's instruction, issued through his leadership team, to the people he was commissioned by God to lead (Joshua 1:2). "... You have not passed this way before," is a much softer way of saying, "You don't know where you're going." It points to the same universal truth, however,... We Need God!

Here are four simple truths, drawn from these instructions, that we must observe today, if, in fact, we want God to Show Us the Way. First, we must maintain our FOCUS upon God. Notice in verse three that the message begins, "As soon as you see the *ark of the covenant of the Lord your God*" This sacred article of furniture, made to the exact specifications of its designer, God, represented for God's chosen people His very presence among them. As they prepared to move forward, obstacles and opposition were certain to present themselves. However, their focus was to remain on God. The preceding generation wandered in the wilderness for forty years because they shifted their focus from God to giants (Numbers 13:32, 33). We, too, are blessed with God among us. We, too, stand to forfeit unknown benefits and blessings whenever our focus is drawn away from God to someone or something else. Along this journey,... We Need God!

Secondly, we must maintain our FAITH in God. Take a look at the message again, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God *being carried by the Levitical priests...*" The Ark of the Covenant, representing the One Who is to lead or show the way, is being carried by the priests. Wow! What a huge demand this placed on their faith then, and on ours today. The Scriptures teach that believers today are a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) and that we carry the presence of God within us, that is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (John 14:17, 23). God is saying, "Don't get it twisted! Just because I've chosen to dwell in you and be transported by you, does not mean that you are to lead the way. I'm still in charge." This personal and privileged fellowship with God requires all the more that we are intentional about our dependence upon Him. For real, for real,... We Need God!

The third observation is that we must maintain our FEAR of GOD. "*Do not come near it.*" In other words, "Keep your distance; You don't know Me like that!" Just because God is among us doesn't mean that He is like us. No, He is high. He is holy. And He must be honored above all. We must be careful to never allow our familiarity with God or our familial relationship with Him to diminish our reverence for Him, His Word, His works, His will or His ways. Such reverent fear of God stimulates and sustains courageous obedience to Him in the face of life's most intimidating of challenges. It's simple, but true... We Need God.

Finally, if we genuinely desire God to Show Us the Way, then we must maintain our FELLOWSHIP behind Him. Fellowship with Him does not negate our need to follow behind Him. The imagery of the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant, as pall bearers carry a casket, could lead some to conclude that some people walk alongside God while the rest of us follow. No, it is only when we all follow in proper proximity to God's leadership that we can see the way to go.

We see Focus, Faith, Fear and Fellowship throughout the life of our Savior. It's no wonder, then, that He's qualified to be our Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). He not only knows the way to our ultimate destination, He knows the way of obedience, even when it costs everything. He is our ark, our anchor and our advocate, Who, having overpowered death and the grave, continually leads us on to victory (2 Corinthians 2:14). There's no doubt about it... We Need God!

Beloved, if we want security, serenity and success along life's journey, let's just K.I.S.S. That is to say, Keep It Simple, Saints! In other words, let's truly trust God to Show Us the Way.