

Trail Guide -- Week of January 6, 2020 (Epiphany)

Navigating the New Year

Epiphany, January 6, celebrates the manifestation, or revelation, of Jesus the Messiah (Christ), to the Gentiles (non-Jews). In Matthew 2, we read the story of the Magi, or Wise Men, who represent all who come seeking to know the Christ. The Magi receive a warning from God to return home by a different route. How did they hear? In a dream. While we don't know who warns them, we assume it is a message from God. Has God spoken to you in a dream? Some other way?

We pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done". But how do we know what is God's will? Can we know? Many Christ-followers have puzzled over God's will. When tragedy happens, is it God's will? When healing happens/does not happen, is it God's will? Why does God allow innocent people to suffer?

Followers of Christ seek to understand God's will from a sincere desire to see this prayer answered in our lives and in our world: "...thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We yearn to live with a sense of purpose and meaning, wanting our lives to make a difference. We wonder, "Does God have a plan for my life? Am I doing what God wants for me? How will I know?"

In a similar vein, when asked about knowing the future, Jesus responded by saying "about that day or hour no one knows... only the Father knows." (Matthew 24:36). Hmm... knowing the will of God might be simpler than we think, especially if we reframe the issue. Maybe if instead of fixating on knowing the will of God, we focused on knowing God?

Let's find out. Together.

Mon, 1/6 *Jeremiah 18.6* – *Essential to knowing and doing God's will, is a willingness to trust God; to become yielded and pliable for God's use, as clay is in the hands of the potter.*

Tues, 1/7 *Proverbs 29.18* – *While some translations have "no vision", most use "no revelation". As Richard Blackaby writes, "The world operates on vision. God's people live by revelation." We live and thrive as we open up to God's presence and to receiving God's dream.*

Wed, 1/8 *Ephesians 3:20* – *Do you have an agenda, a plan, a strategy for your life? All too often, our own agendas, plans, and strategies, no matter how well intentioned, form a barrier to receiving God's direction.*

Thurs, 1/9 *Mark 1:35* – *Jesus knew the importance of getting alone to pray. So what did the Son of God have to pray about? Staying connected and on course with the Father's will. Only then could he truly live a life of obedience. If it was so important for him, how much more so for you and me?*

Fri, 1/10 *Isaiah 55:11* – *When we read scripture, we connect with the Author. We feel both God's passion and compassion. We discover principles for living our lives. And when we read, we hear the voice of God revealing God's intention for our living. As you read, listen for God's voice.*

Sat, 1/11 *Proverbs 11:1b* – *We reap what we sow. When it comes to knowing God and knowing God's will, it is clear that God want us to use our talents, resources, and gifts to build up, not tear down; to strengthen and encourage, not to discourage; etc. So what seeds will you plant in the lives of those around you? In our world?*