

PSALM 32 – PART 4

Psalm 32:8-9 ... “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with my eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.”

An interesting fact about some of the Psalms, is that many of them include both a confession to God and praises to him by their author, plus a direct message from God. Psalm 32 contains all three of those ingredients. In today's passage, David shares with us a message from God to him. The first part of verse 8 reads: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go.” In light of the theme of Psalm 32, we find this very helpful because it comes after David has confessed his sin and praises God for forgiving him.

God never leaves us hanging after he forgives us of a sin. He leans in close to us when our spirits are still repentant and soft; when he knows we are vulnerable and listening for his voice. In that moment of redemption following our brokenness, he then offers us his help to avoid making the same mistake again. It is as close to a hug from God as you might ever feel. Is that not the characteristic of a perfect parent? You may not have had a parent like that, but your Father God stands ready to be that for you.

In telling us that he will teach us and guide us with his eye, God is telling us that we need not blunder through life continuing to make mistakes. That we can listen to him, follow his guidance, and avoid many of the problems we formerly experienced. That sounds wonderful, does it not? However, many people will spend a lifetime making mistakes and ignoring God's guidance. They live like the horse and mule mentioned in verse 9. They cannot find the ability to make wise decisions, because they lack understanding. They are not listeners. David reminds us about horses and mules that will only do what they have been trained or forced to do and, given the opportunity, they will run away to avoid working for you. David tells us, "Do not be like that!"

While man can train animals to do what he wants, God does not treat us like that. God does not force us to do his will. He speaks truth to us, encourages us to be obedient, and blesses us when we are. And, when we go our own way and make our own decisions, he waits for us to return to him broken and hurting so he can mend our wounds, comfort us, and forgive us IF, as we learned in verse 2, there is no deceit in our spirits; when we are humble and honest in our confession and repentance.

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