

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND GUIDANCE

Speaking before an Inter-Varsity missions conference, Urbana '76, Elizabeth Elliot quoted Abraham Lincoln regarding the guidance of God. He wrote: "I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men who are equally certain that they represent the divine will. I am sure that either the one or the other class is mistaken in that belief, and perhaps, in some respect, both. I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that, if it is probable that God would reveal his will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed that he would reveal it directly to me; or unless I am more deceived in myself that I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it. These are not, however, the days of miracles, and I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible, and learn what appears to be wise and right. The subject is difficult, and good men do not agree."

She then continued: "There is no reason to assume that divine guidance is a purely spiritual matter or an inward impression. If we belong to the Lord, lock, stock, and barrel – body, mind, and spirit – why should we expect him to employ only the spirit".

Abraham Lincoln read the Bible every day and appears to have been a dedicated Christian. If you think you have obstacles to overcome, please consider this material which I clipped out of a church paper many years ago about Abraham Lincoln.

- He was born in poverty and his mother died when he was at an early age.
- Almost no opportunity for formal education.
- Failed in business 1831.
- Defeated for legislature 1832.
- Failed again in 1833.
- Elected to legislature 1834.
- Sweetheart died 1835.
- Nervous breakdown 1838.
- Defeated for speaker 1838.
- Defeated for land office 1843.
- Defeated for congress 1843.
- Elected to congress 1846.
- Defeated for re-election 1848.
- Defeated for senate 1855.
- Defeated for vice-president 1856.
- Defeated for senate 1858.
- Elected President 1860.

While I have not personally checked all of this information, we can safely say that President Lincoln did have many struggles in his life and great obstacles to overcome. One secret to his success is he believed he was being guided by God. He apparently never heard the voice of God like Moses or Mt. Sinai or the Apostle John on the Island of Patmos, but by "studying the plain physical facts" he made a diligent effort to discern right from wrong and make decisions that would be pleasing to God. Another reason for his success is that he refused to quit. Each time he failed or fell, he got up and kept going.

I'm not certain all the ways that God is guiding you, but I can say with certainty that He never wants you to quit. No matter how many times you fall or fail, that just like Lincoln you can get up and keep on trying. With the help of God you can take another step, say another prayer, read another verse, sing another song, work another day, shake another hand, smile another smile, help another friend, give another gift, and keep on believing that He who has begun a good work in you will never leave you or forsake you. You can be faithful until death and receive the crown of life.