

"MAKING RIGHT CHOICES, DISCERNING GOD'S WILL"

"GOD WILL ALWAYS GIVE THE VERY BEST TO THOSE WHO LEAVE THE CHOICE WITH HIM"

1. GOD'S GOALS FOR MY LIFE SERVE AS FOUNDATIONAL GUIDELINES:

- a. God's desire for me is to love Him (demonstrated by my willingness to trust in His character), to grow in my understanding of how to please Him, and to allow the Holy Spirit to transform me into His likeness.
- b. God loves every person in the world and He has a plan to reach unbelievers with the good news of salvation and to bring believers to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness in Christ.
- c. God wants me to be willing to let Him use me in His plan, resulting in my being blessed both here on earth as well as eternally in heaven.

2. PREREQUISITES FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WILL.

a. I need to believe that God has His tailor made plan for my life.

Psalm 139:16 *Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.*

Proverbs 16:9 *The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.*

Proverbs 20:24 *Man's steps are ordained by the Lord, how then can man understand his way?*

Jeremiah 10:23 *... a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.*

Acts 13:36 *...David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, (died) ...*

b. God wants me to know His will for me, He doesn't want to hide it from me. He may not give me as much evidence as I want, but He gives me enough to intelligently follow Him by faith.

Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Ephesians 5:17 *So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

Colossians 1:9-10 *... since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

c. God is sovereign and perfectly able to carry out His will.

Ecclesiastes 3:14 *I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him.*
Proverbs 19:21 *Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand.*
Isaiah 46:9-10 *... I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure';*
Daniel 4:35 *"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'*
Acts 17:25 *nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;*

d. I must honestly want to know His will, and prayerfully seek it.

Jeremiah 29:13 *'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.*
Proverbs 2:1-6 *My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*
James 1:5-8 *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

e. Choices that have eternal rewards (that is, motivated by the Holy Spirit) always require a measure of faith, and include a perception of risk. Someone has said, don't ask if something is possible, but rather ask, "is it God's will?", because if it God's will, He will make it possible.

2 Cor. 4:16-18 *... we do not lose heart, ... For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*
Gal. 3:11 *... "The righteous man shall live by faith."*
Heb. 11:6 *... without faith it is impossible to please Him, ...*
1 Peter 1:6-7 *... now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

f. Choices based on faith may result in sacrifice and/or suffering. There is a price for obedience to His will. Trials ought not to be viewed as an enemy.

Luke 21:1-4 *And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in **all that she had to live on.**"*

Heb. 5:8 *Although He was a Son, He learned obedience **from the things which He suffered.***

James 1:2-4 *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

g. I need to choose to humble myself before God with a submissive attitude, "allowing" Him to teach me and change my priorities, as He deems best.

Psalms 25:9 *He leads the **humble** in justice, and He teaches the **humble** His way.*

Psalms 32:8-9 *I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. **Do not be as the horse or as the mule** which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.*

Acts 13:22 *... He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, **who will do all** My will.'*

3. FOUR FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN MAKING RIGHT CHOICES:

a. THE WORD OF GOD: Does the Bible say something specific about the matter, or present principles related to it?

Psalms 119:105 *Your word is a **lamp** to my feet and a **light** to my path.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for **training** in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

1 Thess. 5:16-18 *Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for **this is God's will** for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thess. 4:3-5 *For **this is the will of God**, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

Hebrews 4:12 *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able **to judge the thoughts** and intentions of the heart.*

b. THE PEACE OF GOD: Do I have God's peace?

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
Colossians 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule (that is: “act as an umpire”) in your hearts, ... and be thankful.*
Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

<<<CAUTION>>> "Feelings" and "desires" may be deceptive. My natural tendency is not to follow His direction, but rather to be independent. Be honest with yourself! It is often helpful to ask yourself (and God), “Would this be pleasing to God?”.

Proverbs 16:2 *All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives.*
Proverbs 28:26 *He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered.*
Jeremiah 17:9 *“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”*
Galatians 5:17 *For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*

<<<CAUTION>>> I need to confess any known sin.

Psalms 66:18 *If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear;*
Proverbs 28:9 *He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.*
Proverbs 28:13 *He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.*
James 4:3 *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*
1 John 1:5-10 *This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.*

c. CIRCUMSTANCES: There is really only "One Circumstance" and that is God. Are circumstances suitable? Are doors opening? Or closing? Finances? (Caution: If not used carefully, credit cards (and/or credit) can be a hindrance to God's freedom to use finances as an instrument to guide me.)

<<<CAUTION>>> Are the obstacles (problems) a "Trial" or "Direction"? The path of least resistance may not be God's will. Difficulties or suffering do not necessarily prove that I am not in the center of God's will any more than material and comfort blessings prove that I am in the center of His will.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (Paul) ... *we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;*

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 (Paul, in the center of God's will) *Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ...*

d. SPIRITUAL COUNSEL: I should seek godly and wise counsel. (My spouse may also "balance" me.)

Proverbs 1:5 *A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.*

Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*

Proverbs 15:22 *Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.*

Proverbs 19:20 *Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.*

<<<CAUTION>>> Counsel can be wrong.

Job 2:9 *Then his wife said to him (Job), "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"*

Job 42:7 ... *the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has.*

See also: 1 Kings 13:1-26

4. TWO DIFFERENT METHODS FOR MAKING CHOICES:

- a. **“Active” - Unless otherwise directed I cautiously move ahead in what honestly appears to be the best direction, consciously trusting God to confirm or to restrain, by either opening or shutting doors. (You can't steer a parked car, or a boat that's tied to the dock.) Note: This is usually the way we seek a spouse or a job, buy a house or a car; that is, things we want.**

Psalm 37:23-24 *The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the One who holds his hand.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Isaiah 30:21 *Your ears will hear a word behind you, “This is the way, walk in it,” whenever you turn to the right or to the left.*

Acts 16:6-10 *They (Paul and team) passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

- b. **“Passive” - I “wait” for God to do something special. Too often this is the way Christians seek to know God’s will, especially regarding things they may not desire. This may seem like an easier way to make choices, but it is not always practical or consistent with the way we usually make choices. Sometimes this is the only thing we can do.**

Exodus 14:14 *“The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”*

Psalm 27:14 *Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.*

Psalm 37:7 *Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; ...*

5. A COUPLE OF BASIC QUESTIONS TO ASK MYSELF:

- *If I could choose one course for my life would it be one of my selection or one of God's selection?*
- *Do I prefer to know God's plan and purpose for my daily life while I'm still here on earth and am able to act upon it, or would I rather wait until I stand before Christ at the judgment of believers? (2 Cor. 5:10) It seems reasonable that each of us is going to become aware of His purpose and plan for our life, either here on earth -- or there.*

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(Read from bottom to top)

CRITERIA

4. Counsel Of Spiritual Christians.
3. Circumstances.
2. The Peace Of God.
1. The Word Of God.

A SURRENDERED ATTITUDE

4. A Willingness To Exercise Faith.
3. An Openness To Be Changed By Him.
2. To Be Prayerfully Seeking His Will For Me.
1. A Desire To Allow God To Fulfill His Will In My Life.

PREREQUISITES

2. I Need To Believe That God Is Sovereign And Perfectly Able To Carry Out His Purpose And Plan For My Life.
1. I Need To Believe That God Has A Personal And Individualized Plan And Purpose For My Life.

GOD'S GOALS

3. God's Desire Is To Bless And To Use Me In His Purposes, Resulting In Me Being Blessed Both Here On Earth As Well As Eternally In Heaven.
2. God Loves Every Person In The World And He Wants To Use Me In His Plan To Reach Unbelievers With The Good News Of Salvation And To Bring Believers To Maturity In Christ.
1. God's Desire For Me Is To Love Him (Demonstrated By Surrender And Obedience To Him), To Be Growing In My Understanding Of How To Please Him, And To Be Letting The Holy Spirit Transform Me Into His Likeness.

