

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, May 6, 2015 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

KNOWING AND DOING THE WILL OF GOD

Introduction

Romans 8:28-29, Ephesians 5:1-20

Far too many Christians have relied on vague hunches and weird hocus pocus to know God's will. The paths that lead to an understanding of His plan are strewn with the litter of confusion, mystery, frustration, guilt, and superstition. Long enough! God isn't playing a guessing game with His people... with believers, Christians. His will for us is neither puzzling nor hidden within some deep, dark cave requiring magical words to let us in on the secret. No, nothing like that at all. He want us as believers to know and to do His will; therefore, He is actively engaged in the process of revealing it. Contrary to popular opinion, anyone who sincerely seeks His will can find it.

Admittedly, there are a few biblical insights that can help us clarify the will of God. That's the purpose of this study. In this study on "Knowing and Doing the Will of God" you will find plain and uncomplicated words that will give the assistance you and I need to pursue God's will for our lives. Because everything in this study rests firmly on scriptural foundations and Biblical truth, you can rely on its counsel without fear of being misled. Who knows? This study could include the answers you need that will help put your life on target... perhaps something for which you have been longing for years. I certainly hope so! Let's dig into "Knowing and Doing the Will of God."

Some interesting question for us to examine concerning God's will?

1. Is God's will easy or hard to determine? What do you think? Why?
2. How do you determine God's will with certainty? What methods do you use and how clear to you feel you get an answer?
3. Have you struggled to know God's will? If so, why?
4. Do you every feel that God is not giving you clear direction on His will for your life? Why? Why do you think that is happening, or that you are feeling that?
5. Do you believe that we can ever really know God's will for our lives 100% certainty? How do you (can you) know?

OUR ATTEMPTS AT FINDING GOD'S WILL

*"It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside and enigma."
-Sir Winston Churchill*

That quote is the way Winston Churchill once described the actions of Russia in the first World War. That is also the way many would describe the will of God... at least that is how many of us have or do feel about the will of God. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery (an unknown, a clandestine secret) inside an enigma (a huge paradox, conundrum, perplexity) for many of us. As a result, all kinds of approaches and techniques are used to attempt to decipher the secret code of "God Mysterious Will." Some are so ridiculous they make us shake our heads in disbelief. If they were not employed with such sincerity and devotion, they would be downright hilarious, yet those who have struggled and yearned to know God's will in their life have poured their heart and soul, with all sincerity into some unbelievable methods. NOTE: This is not intended to offend anyone. Some of these methods may reflect similar ones that you have tried in a desperate attempt to know and honor God by finding His will. If so please know that God loves you and delights in your desire to know Him follow His will, yet He is a God who makes Himself and His plans abundantly clear and not through tricky and obscure secret coded messages.

Some Unbelievable Methods:

If we were looking for a new television series, or a new reality TV show that would be sure to hold our attention, amuse and entertain, we could name this one "That's Unbelievable!" Listen as the case studies are read. As each is read think about the following questions:

- 1. What is right or wrong with this method of seeking to determine God's will? Why?**
- 2. What might be a positive about the use of this method of seeking to determine God's will?**
- 3. What might be a negative about the use of this method of seeking to determine God's will?**

- 1. CASE STUDY 1:** A lady received a brochure advertising a tour to Israel. Because going to the Holy Land was one of her lifelong dreams, she really wanted to go. She had the money, the time, the interest, and the strength. But was it God's will? Before going to bed she read the pamphlet once more and noticed that the airplane they would be traveling on was a 747 jumbo jet. After spending a sleepless night, tossing and turning, wrestling with all the pros and cons of going on the trip, she was greatly relieved the following morning. She now knew it was God's will for her to go. How did she know for sure? When she awoke and glanced at her digital clock, it was flashing 7:47. That was her "sign" from God.
- 2. CASE STUDY 2:** A college student needed a car. He spoke to his parents about it, and they agreed to help him in his purchase. He found several that he liked and the price of each was what he and his parents had agreed on, but he didn't know which one God would have him purchase. As a Christian, he was determined to find God's will before he bought anything. The next night he had a series of dreams. Everything in his dream was yellow. He had his answer. One of the cars he had looked at was yellow. He was sure that was the one God wanted him to purchase. He bought the car, took it home and began to enjoy his car, however he had not bothered to check out the car thoroughly. It was yellow so he bought it! Appropriately, it turned out to be a yellow lemon!
- 3. CASE STUDY 3:** A pastor had served as a deacon in a former church prior to his being called into the ministry. He toyed with the idea of buying a Doctor of Divinity degree from a

degree mill. He really wanted that degree, but he struggled with whether or not it was God's will. Late one afternoon he stumbled across the answer he'd been looking for. Because it was in the Bible, all doubt was removed. The Lord had confirmed the minister's desire in 1 Timothy 3:13, "For they that have used the office of deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree..."

4. **CASE STUDY 4:** A young Christian, who lived in Washington D.C., was really struggling with the choice of his career. As he was driving and praying one day he ran out of gas right in front of the Philippine Embassy. He got his answer. God wanted him to be a missionary and serve the Lord in the Philippines. **I wonder what this young man would do if he found himself suddenly stuck on an elevator with a single young woman named Mary. Would that be God's sign to marry her?*
5. **CASE STUDY 5:** A woman had been trying to discover God's will on a particular decision that was almost impossible to determine. Finally she boiled it down to one of two options. As she drove down the street, she prayed, "Lord, if it is Your will that I choose Option A, then keep the light at the next corner green until I get there." Sure enough when she got to the intersection the light was green and she determined that Option A was truly God's will for her in that important decision.

These are all dangerous, though not untried, methods that have been used to try to decipher the will of God. I say dangerous because maybe you have heard the story of the Christian man who sat by the window with his Bible opened and allowed the wind to whip the pages over as he picked out a "verse for the day" to claim. His finger fell at random on the words "Judas when and hanged himself." Bewildered and shocked, he tried again and landed on "Go and do thou likewise." Further dismayed he quickly tried a third time as the wind-and-finger method led him to "Whatsoever thou doest, do quickly."

"Ridiculous!" you say. Of course, it is! And so are all these other strange approaches to determining God's will on what are often very important, life altering decisions. And yet, we've hardly scratched the surface of the wild and weird methods well-meaning people use to find God's will.. It happens every day. Among people just like you and me who sincerely want to know the will of God.

SOME GENUINE CONCERNS ABOUT FINDING GOD'S WILL (Romans 8:28-29, Ephesians 5:1-20)

Not to put too fine of a point on it, knowing and doing God's will is of paramount importance for a Christian. Our desire as believers should be to follow Him and His plan for our life. Our genuine concern should be to know for certain what that plan... His will is.

Questions of Genuine Concern About God's Will for My Life:

1. **What is God's ultimate will for my life? (Romans 8:28-29)** - The Apostle Paul makes an interesting statement that we have we quote and know from memory, but I wonder sometimes if we have really internalized the truth of his statement made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We quote these verses when something happens that we don't necessarily understand, or that doesn't make sense, but perhaps there is more than often meets the eye. Paul said in Romans 8:28-29, *"²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For*

those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” – Romans 8:28-29 (NIV) Based on this passage what would you say is God’s will for us as His children, as believers? Verse 29 says His will, or desire, or predetermined will is for us “to be conformed to the image of his Son...” to be like Jesus. You want to know what God’s ultimate will for your life is, here it is... “to be conformed to the image of his Son...” to be like Jesus, to reflect Jesus Christ in all that we say and do with our lives as His.

2. **What does God’s ultimate will for my life look like? (Ephesians 5:1-20)** - The next question of genuine concern would have to be what does that look like for me personally? What does it look like for me to “conform (take on the shape, image) to the image of His (God’s) Son (Jesus)? Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:1-17 (READ: Ephesians 5:1-20).

3 Parts to God’s Will for My Christian Life: (based on Ephesians 5:1-20)

- (1) **God’s will is for you to live a life of love** – Verse 2 says we are to “live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice for to God.” It is a love that is sacrificial, that is giving of self, putting others ahead of ourselves, that is kind, forgiving, forbearing. Ephesians 4:32 pictures it. It is a love that is beautifully portrayed in 1 Corinthians 13, the great love chapter. **Perspective: It think it is important for us to establish that ultimately God’s will for your life is much more concerned with how you love each day, than it is with what job you take, where you choose to live, or which house or car to buy.**
- (2) **God’s will is for you to live a life of purity** – Purity could also be called “holiness.” We are to like a life that is set apart for God and His purposes, not to gratify our self or our flesh to please Him. Paul says in verse 3, “³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...” And on down in verses 8, 9 and 10 Paul tells us that we are to “live as children of life, for the fruit of the light consist in all goodness, righteousness and truth and find out what pleases the Lord.” In other words we to live a life that honors and glorifies Him, a life of purity, and holiness, one that is lived according to what He reveals to us in His Word... by His principles and standards, and in His Spirit, not in the flesh. As verse 15 puts it, “¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” We are to live purely His! That is His will for us in being conformed to His likeness! That is how He lived!
- (3) **God’s will is for you to live a life of worship** - Paul also tells us that God’s will is for us to live a life of worship. He states it explicitly in verse 17 and following. Verse 17 says, “¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” He then goes on to describe for us a life lived out as a worship service before God. We are to live this way. This is His will for us, Paul says. Notice how he describe the kind of life God desire us to live, “filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, making music to the Lord in our hearts, giving thanks to the Father for “everything”, all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a worship service... life lived as a worship service. That is His will for you.

Key Take Away Statement: “God’s will is rooted in relationship... with Him.”

Now in stating these things as “God’s will” for your life, it may leave you wondering about the others seemingly important decisions and choice we are called to make in life that create in us a desire to know God’s heart. What is God’s will for me then in a given circumstance or situation? Surely He cares about even the seemingly smaller issues of my life? Lest we oversimplify the problem of knowing and doing God’s will, let’s understand that there are some legitimate areas of concern that aren’t specifically addressed in Scripture. And intelligent, caring, genuine people in God’s family are often at a loss to know what God would have them to do. Let me give you some examples of these. *Listen as I read each and think about what kind of encouragement and advice you might give to them as one Christian trying to discern God’s will to another:*

Case studies on some genuine concerns involving God’s will:

1. A high school senior plays pretty good basketball. He can attend his choice of 10 to 12 different colleges, each offering a full scholarship. Which one is God’s will for the Christian athlete?
2. A single, happy, well-educated young woman has a good job and a hassle-free life style. But to her surprise she has recently found herself attracted to several young men at her church – all are believer as she is. Should she start thinking seriously about marriage? If so, which one would be God’s choice for her?
3. A family is living in Southern California. They have numerous friends, a good church, a nice home, and family roots nearby. But mom and dad are starting to hate the smog more and more. The hurried pace mixed with very heavy traffic and too many people is starting to take the fun out of life. They want to move – but is it God’s will? And if it is, where would He have them live?
4. A Christian couple has two children. She want one or two more. He feels that two are about all they can handle. Both think they know God’s will. Which one is right?

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT GOD’S WILL

Knowing and doing God’s will can leave us with some very real dilemmas. On the one hand Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:17, “...do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” Such verses prod us off the fence of indecision, yet we are often anxious not to do something “foolish” in the process.

3 Things to Remember About God’s Will As We Begin Our Study:

1. Even when our hearts is right and our motives pure, the will of God is not always set forth in a crystal clear manner -
2. God’s will for your life is much more concerned with how you love and live each day, than it is with what job you take, where you choose to live, or what house or car to buy.
3. God’s will is rooted in relationship... with Him -