

How to Make Good Decisions: Knowing God's Will

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*For details of this see the message series "24: Making Decisions."

False Starts (wrong ways to find God's will):

1. Bible Magic- using Bible verses out of context in a way they weren't meant to be used.
2. The Fleece Test- making deals with God, "If you want me to do this, then..."; Judges 6:36-38.
3. The Peace Meter- thinking if it is "right" there will be more peace in your heart; sometimes there isn't.
4. Circumstantial Evidence- thinking if a "door is open or closed" it is God's sign for his will; Acts 23:1-6
5. Go-&-Ask-Questions-Later Tater- doing what you think is right without seeking God's guidance.

The Core Thought: God's wonderful plan is discovered as we abide and decide.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:35)

"I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, NKJV)

Deciding Principles:

1. We make decisions in submission to God's sovereign will (it removes our stress; God is in control).
2. We make decisions within the parameters of God's moral will (found in the Bible; good decisions will not contradict biblical principles).
3. Within God's parameters, we often have the freedom of personal choice.
4. We make decisions with a motive of love for everyone involved (love God, love others).
5. We make decisions to move us into our strengths and away from our weaknesses (love ourselves).
Sometimes however, God leads us into our weakness...where we are weak, he is strong (2 Corinthians 12:10).
6. Good decisions are not made alone; they are made with wise guys (i.e., Jethro, Exodus 18:17-19; Proverbs 15:22).

God Communicates: History has shown that there are FOUR great ways that God communicates to us: the Bible, Circumstances, Prayer, and Others.

Ultimately: We need to hear God's voice.

- The principles and commands of the Bible, our circumstances, prayers and advice by others are usually not clear enough without God's specific voice.

The Goal: We will recognize and be led by God's voice after we develop an intimate, conversational relationship with God himself (John 10:3-5).

The Glitches: God's voice is often muffled by our...

- Sin (not doing what pleases God)
- Busyness (not carving out time to develop a conversational relationship with God)
- Wrong motives (wanting God to do what we want)
- Selfish resistance (not willing to do what God wants)

The Guides: Questions that help us know if this is God's voice...

1. Will this honor God?
2. Is this consistent with the Bible?
3. Will this be possible without breaking a previous commitment?
4. Is this confirmed with circumstances, other people, and deep peace?

The Game Plan: The only way to develop an intimate, conversational relationship with God is by spending time with God in prayer and Bible study. The more we do this, like any other relationship, the easier it gets to both understand God's ways and hear his voice.