

Seeking God's Will

So far we have examined how we get to know God's nature and sovereignty through the Bible. We have considered our relationship to Him through our devotion and service to Him. These things we can know and do in general, but God is also moving in ways that we cannot see.

The citizens of Feldkirch, Austria, didn't know what to do when Napoleon's massive army was preparing to attack. Soldiers had been spotted on the heights above the little town, which was situated on the Austrian border. A council of citizens was hastily summoned to decide whether they should try to defend themselves or display the white flag of surrender. It happened to be Easter Sunday, and the people had gathered in the local church. The pastor rose and said, "Friends, we have been counting on our own strength, and apparently that has failed. As this is the day of our Lord's resurrection, let us just ring the bells, have our services as usual, and leave the matter in His hands. We know only our weakness, and not the power of God to defend us." The council accepted his plan and the church bells rang. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army had arrived during the night to defend the town. Before the service ended, the enemy broke camp and left. The only improvement on this story would be that seeking God's will should have been the *first* thing they should have done.

Many of the things we could do to be stronger are *generally* God's will and make us *ready* to receive God's *specific* will for our lives. We should try to discern God's will in any matter from small to large. Have you lost something? Pray and ask God to help you find it. Do you need a job? Pray about it. Are you looking for a life's mate? Pray, and then pray some more.

1. Live expecting to see God's will -

There are many things that we can do to make us stronger in the faith like

praying, Bible reading, evangelism, stewardship, personal holiness, worship, fellowship, and study. There is no particular order for these. It is not as though you should try to do one and then build upon that with the rest. But, it should also occur to us that *Seeking God's Will* should be at the front of the list. *We* might not have a particular order for growing spiritually, but certainly *God* would know what our priorities should be. As we seek God's will, we should live expecting to find it however the Lord reveals it to us.

Consider the case of Abraham's servant who was charged with finding a wife for Isaac. That is not a job I would like to have...unless I had God showing me!

Gen 24:1-27 And Abraham was old, *and* well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

The servant then wondered what would happen if the woman wouldn't leave to come back with him. He asked if he should go get Isaac and take him to her. Abraham told him not to bring his son back to the old country and that he would be free of his oath. As the servant went arrived to the Abraham's country, he came to a well where the daughters of the men came to draw water. At that point, he prayed.

12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee,

send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I stand *here* by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: *let the same be she that* thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

At that point, Rebekah came out and fulfilled his prayer request. When the servant came to Rebekah's father, he said something very interesting about seeking God's will in his explanation to Nahor.

26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

27 And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: **I *being* in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.**

This man is properly unnamed because he was nobody, even though he ruled over Abraham's house. His life was totally given over in the service of Abraham. Abraham wanted him to go out on a mission and he said, "Yes, sir!" He wasn't quite sure how to do it, so he sought some wisdom from Abraham, but then away he went. He prayed to God for wisdom, and God blessed him. The beautiful part of this story is in verse 27: *I being in the way, the LORD led me...*

Sometimes we don't know where God is taking us. Sometimes the way is scary. Always the way is exciting. Properly lived, the Christian life is the most exciting there is on the face of the earth. Somewhere along the way as we are serving Christ, God makes His will known to us. Look at the way God

showed His will to the Jews at the Temple when Jesus came by.

John 2:13-18 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

These people didn't really need a sign. God was making His will known with a scourge of small cords. Don't sit around waiting for a sign before you'll do *anything* for the Lord. Sometimes His will is obvious. I might not know exactly what to say when I meet someone new, but I know I'm going to try to talk to him about his salvation if I can. I might not know exactly what I am going to face each day, but I know it is *not* going to involve laying around the house waiting for God to call me on the phone to tell me what to do. I know I'm going to go to work on whatever is going on. Going about our normal Christian responsibilities are things that we can call the sure *As*. This reminds me of a discussion Nancy had with a classmate. He said that when he wanted to improve his grade, there would be some things that he could do that were automatically given an A. If you had to know where to start to improve, do the normal Christian responsibilities. Along the way, expect that God will show you His will.

Some things about God's will are not so obvious though. Sometimes we interpret the things we *want* to do as God's will when it is really only us wanting something really bad.

You probably heard about the guy who was trying to lose weight, but came to the office one day with two dozen donuts.

His co-workers asked him why he got donuts if he's trying to diet, and he answered, "Well, as I came to the corner where the donut shop was, I told God that if He wanted me to buy some donuts to have a parking spot open right in front of the donut shop. And on the eighth time around the block, there it was!"

2. Diligently seek God, not just His will -

Seek God, Himself, which was covered in another message.

Prov 1:7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Heb 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Luke 19:3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

Make sure you are saved, that you are one of God's children.

Matt 16:24-26 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever

will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

3. Pray -

When you pray, be ready to do what God says. So many times people lightly respond that they would do whatever God wanted...until you show them what is in the Bible!

Jas 1:5-8 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

4. Obey the plain commands of God in the Bible -

Matt 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

John 14:15-17 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

5. Seek principles of wisdom from God's Word -

Ps 119:9-16 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

6. Seek out godly leaders -

Prov 1:5-6 A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

Prov 1:8-9 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

9 For they *shall be* an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

Prov 13:1 A wise son *heareth* his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

7. Look at what God has put in front of you -

The servant was "in the way." He was on the way to doing what he needed to do and God opened the door for him

when he got there.

Paul went where God opened the doors for him.

1Cor 16:9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.

Rev 3:7-8 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;
8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Exod 4:1-5 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

2 And the LORD said unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:

5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

If you have not asked God to be your Savior, that is the first step of God's will.

1Tim 2:3-5 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the

knowledge of the truth.

5 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

If you are saved, are you now a disciple of Christ? Are you diligently "in the way" learning about God's will for you? You might be pursuing a goal, but does that mean for you that you are doing the hard work that it takes to get to that goal? Or, are you just looking for a blessing to be dropped down in your lap for you to consume?

For the bulletin:

In Alice in Wonderland, when Alice comes to a junction in the road that leads in different directions, she asks the Cheshire Cat, "Cheshire-Puss...would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to go to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where," replied Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

In a British Cemetery:

Pause my friend, as you walk by
As you are now, so once was I
As I am now so you will be
Prepare my friend, to follow me.

A visitor added:

To follow you is not my intent
Until I know which way you went!

— Source unknown

1. Live expecting to see God's will - Gen 24:1-27, John 2:13-18
2. Diligently seek God, not just His will - Prov 1:7, Heb 11:6, Luke 19:3, Matt 16:24-26
3. Pray - Jas 1:5-8
4. Obey the plain commands of God in the Bible - Matt 25:23, John 14:15-17
5. Seek principles of wisdom from God's Word - Ps 119:9-16
6. Seek out godly leaders - Prov 1:5-6, Prov 1:8-9, Prov 13:1

7. Look at what God has put in front of you - 1Cor 16:9, Rev 3:7-8, Exod 4:1-5, 1Tim 2:3-5