

**Xenos Christian Fellowship  
Christian Principles Unit 4  
Challenges and Opportunities of Spiritual Growth**

**Week 7: Discovering the Will of God**

**Introduction**

Decisions that are not clearly within the moral framework of God's will.

**Three Foundational Considerations**

1)

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**(Rom. 12:2\*)** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

**(Eph. 2:10)** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**(Rom. 8:29)** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;

**(1 Thess. 4:3)** For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

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**(Rom. 12:2a,3-8)** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is . . . (3) For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. (4) For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, (5) so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (6) And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy. . . (7) if service. . ., or he who teaches. . . (8) or he who exhorts . . ., he who gives . . ., he who leads. . ., he who shows mercy. . .

2)

**(Col. 1:9,10)** For this reason also, 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, 10 so that you may 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;

**(Col. 4:12)** Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

**(John 10; Ps. 23)**

3)

(Acts 8:26-40)- Philip's call to "go to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." Then later to "go up and join this chariot."

(Acts 10)- God reveals his will to Cornelius and Peter

(Acts 16:9ff)- Paul's vision of the man from Macedonia.

Qualification:

"I believe God has an individual will for my life and for every life, but its realization depends on a true surrender of *my* will and *your* will to Him for the fulfillment of His plan as and where He sees best. He may, however, leave considerable freedom of choice within His moral will...(J. Oswald Sanders. *Every Life is a Plan of God*. (Discovery House Pub. Grand Rapids. 1992) p. 39.

## Practical Guidelines for Discovering God's Will

### 1) Principles of Guidance

#### a. Scripture--Soak your mind in it.

(Isaiah 55:8,9) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

(1 Cor. 2:9-16) but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." (10) For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. (11) For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, (13) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. (14) But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (15) But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. (16) For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

(Rom. 12:2a) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is . . .

(Isaiah 41:9,10) You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts, And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. (10) 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

**b. Willing—Be willing to do God's will before you know it.**

(John 7:17\*) "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.

(James 1:5ff, 6-8) But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (6) But let him ask in faith without any doubting, . . (7) For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, (8) being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

**c. Acting—Act on God's moral will that you know.**

(Mt. 13:12\*) "For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

(Heb. 3:7-19)

Matt. 26:39 Jesus in Gethsemane (" . . . not my will, but your will be done . . . ")

**Example:**

**Positive point:**

"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened." (C.S. Lewis. *The Great Divorce*. (MacMillan Pub. Co. New York. 1946) p.72)

**d. Praying—Pray regularly for God's guidance?**

(Prov. 3:5,6) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

**Conclusion:**

**2) "Road Signs" - Things that sometimes reveal God's will.**

- a. Common Sense:** The ability to consider different courses of action and the likely implications of each.

"Spiritual expedience"

"Look before you leap."

(Titus 1:8) but hospitable, loving what is good, **sensible**, just, devout, self-controlled

**Qualification:**

"Pro's and Con's" list, But...

**b. Spiritual counsel**

(Prov. 11:14; 24:6) "In the abundance of counselors is victory."

(Prov. 12:15; 13:10,18) "The wise man listens to advice."

(Prov. 15:22) "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed."

(Prov. 19:20) "Listen to advice."

(Prov. 20:5) "A plan in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding draws it out."

(Prov. 20:18) "Plans are established by counsel"

(Prov. 27:17) "Iron sharpens iron"

**Qualification:**

**Remember:**

**c. Personal Desires**

**Avoid the extremes of \_\_\_\_\_ or**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Example:**

**d. Gifts/ ministry burdens**

**e. Intuition**

**f. Inner peace**

This is a certain kind of intuition, deep-seated calmness from God about a direction you've chosen to take.

**Qualifications:**

**g. Delegated authorities**

Includes parents, husband, government, employer, and church leaders.

**Example:**

**Qualification:**

If we choose to go against a delegated authority, we should ask: "Why am I going against this delegated authority? Am I aware of any character issues that God is teaching me through this person? Have I sought counsel to this effect? Have I learned the lesson?"

**h. Circumstances**

Circumstances play a relatively minor role in major complex decisions.

Fleeing (see Gideon, **Judges 6**).

Open/ Closed doors (compare **2 Cor 2:12,13** and **1 Cor 16:8,9**)

**i. Results**

**Qualification:**

**3) Important Qualifications**

**a. Avoid the extremes of Christian Deism vs. "super-spirituality."**

"There are two things to be leaned against simultaneously: the first is living as though God did not

exist and as though He could not or would not lead us; the second is living as though God's leading were almost magic without any use of the mind."

**b. God leads through Scripture.**

"Another thing to lean against is [the idea]...that we can know God's leading with the same finality that we have concerning the teaching of Scripture, for example, about the deity of Christ. When we are led, we must acknowledge that since we are both finite and sinful we can be mistaken. Thus, the Lord can lead us so clearly [in a particular moment], and yet we can never say at that moment that we personally know this to be truth on the same level as Scripture. When the Lord led my wife and myself to begin L'Abri, the leading was so clear that not to have moved forward would have been disobedience. And yet if you had asked me at that time if I was as sure of this as I was that which Scripture taught, I could not have said yes. But as the years have passed there is no doubt that we did understand the leading of the Lord [in beginning L'Abri]. (Francis Schaeffer. *The Letters of Francis Schaeffer*. (Crossway Books. Westchester, IL. 1985) p. 163.)

**c. God does not lead mechanically.**

"Thus we face a balance--by living in a personal relationship to God, and by not living as if God were not there. But this does not mean that I must find God's leading in a mechanical and legalistic way, and perfectly in every case, or God will cast me off.

I personally could not live for twenty-four hours without looking to the leading of the Lord, and this is how I live my life, not in theory, but in practice. But I also know the freedom I have of knowing there is no mechanical formula given in the Scripture, but that it must be a day-by-day closeness to God...And I have the freedom of knowing that if I honestly miss this way somewhere, God will still deal with me gently." (Francis Schaeffer. *The Letters of Francis Schaeffer*. (Crossway Books. Westchester, IL. 1985) p. 164.)

**d. God's leading may not be obvious before we decide.**

## **Conclusion:**

Teach others the importance of personally discerning God's will for their lives.

Avoid the extremes of "paralysis by analysis" vs. "Husky Dog"

**(Ps. 32:8,9)** "I will instruct you and guide you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. (9) Do not be as the horse or the mule with no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check."

Remember to apply God's grace.

## **Memory Verses**

**Rom. 12:2\***- God's will for our life revolves around our sanctification and his role for our lives in his purpose here on earth.

**Jn. 7:17\***- Learning God's will is predicated upon our first being willing to do his will, even before knowing what it is.

**Matt. 13:12\*** - As we are responsive to God's will in our lives, he will continue to unfold his will in the other areas. The reverse is also true.

## **Assignment**

Evangelism passages: Provide a one or two sentence description of the key meaning of each of these verses as they apply to evangelism.

**1 Cor. 3:6,7; John 12:32,16:8; Col. 4:2-4; Luke 15:3-10; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 5:11,18-20**