

## **Walking in the Will of God – Part 2**

### **Acts 16:6-12**

#### **Introduction:**

1. “Pastor, how can I know if this is God’s will?” “How can I know if I am walking in God’s will?” “How do I discern God’s will?” These are very common questions that come to me.
2. Many believers live very frustrated Christian lives because they mistakenly think:
  - God’s will always manifests itself in outward, tangible blessings. They reason, “If circumstances are bad, I must be out of God’s will.”
  - God’s will is based on inner, subjective feelings. If I feel unhappy or frustrated, I must be out of God’s will.
  - God’s will is based upon some fore-ordained plan. Therefore, I am always trying to **find** God’s will or fearful I missed it.
3. When we do not rightly divide God’s Word, we can easily take Scripture passages (like our text today) out of context, and make false assumptions about how God works and how God’s will is revealed to the believer today.
4. When it comes to this matter of God’s will, there are two key components:

#### **First, we must discern God’s will.**

#### **Second, we must do God’s will.**

1. This is quite logical and may sound very simple, but it can be one of the toughest challenges of your life.
2. It is fruitless to **know** God’s will if you do not **do** God’s will. This is where so many of us fall short. We hear God’s Word taught, we read it, and it is in black and white, but then we have to act upon it and do it. James 1:22-25
3. God’s will was revealed very clearly to Paul, and notice his response in verse 10. Notice the word “*immediately*.” There was no delay.
  - When God revealed His plan, Paul, Silas, and Timothy got busy **doing** the will of God.
  - They didn’t sit around complaining, griping, or making excuses why they couldn’t do it.
4. As we learned last week, God never instructs believers in the body of Christ to wait on some sort of vision or supernatural occurrence to help us discern God’s will. This was a very unique and special time in biblical history.
  - Supernatural callings such as this were very rare occurrences that happened for a specific purpose, for that time, from God. Paul was an apostle on a very special mission. He also did not have God’s completed Word. He probably had no New Testament at all.
5. Today we have God’s will revealed to us fully in the Bible. Not only this, we have God’s Holy Spirit who teaches us God’s Word and reminds us of God’s Word when we yield to Him and walk in Him.

6. “What is the will of God?” “How do I find it?” It is found in the Bible, rightly divided. Therefore, if there is a specific command found in God’s Word, you simply obey it. You do it! **Examples:**
  - It is God’s will that we live pure and holy lives. 1 Thessalonians 4:3
  - It is God’s will that we exercise thankfulness. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
  - It is God’s will that we renew our minds and not conform to this present evil world. Romans 12:2
  - As we study God’s Word, yielded to the Spirit, it renews our minds that we may prove (discern) God’s will, which is good, acceptable, and perfect.
7. I know what you are thinking. “But Pastor Dan, what about gray areas that are not clearly revealed in the Bible, like “What person do I marry?” “Which job do I take?” “Which car do I buy?” “Which college do I go to?” “Do I take the job promotion and move?” etc.
8. As we learned last week, God’s will and plan has been fully revealed in His Word. God has a plan and purpose for members of the body of Christ and it is described and fully revealed in His Word.
  - Once you are saved, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell you and help you understand God’s Word to you, and also to fill you with wisdom in how to apply it to the details of your life.
  - Through the completed Word of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit, God has enabled the believer to make wise choices. We no longer need visions, dreams, audible voices, or any other supernatural occurrence to help us discern God’s will. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
9. What is God’s will or plan? The Word of God draws the circle of God’s will. As a believer, you are free in Christ to live within that circle on the basis of faith.
  - You have been made competent through God’s completed Word and through God’s Holy Spirit to look at life and apply the truth of God’s Word, making wise choices and decisions based on the application of God’s Word.
10. This is what Paul meant when he said that all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient (1 Corinthians 6:12). As long as I am living within the circle of God’s Word, I am free to do whatever I desire (I’m in the circle, I’m in the plan).
11. But there may be choices that are lawful for me to make, but simply are not expedient. That is, they are not for my best long-term advantage.
  - **Illustration:** You would like to buy a house. You narrow it down to two houses. One of them is not quite as nice, but very affordable in your budget. The other house is more of your dream home, but will stretch your budget to the max, and if anything goes wrong in life or unexpected expenses arise, you will be in trouble. How do you decide?
  - You are free in Christ to buy either one, but you are responsible to take God’s principles, apply them, and make a decision that is expedient and wise.

- But most believers don't live this way. They look for a "sign." They reason, "I was walking through the more expensive home, asking God for a sign, and I walked in one of the bedrooms and there was a Bible verse on the wall, and I knew right away that this was God telling me that this was the one He wanted me to have."
  - You and I both know that if that is the house you want and you are looking for divine justification, you are going to find a sign from God in that house somewhere.
  - The sad part is when that same person two years later can't pay his mortgage, and he says, "I don't know why God is doing this to me... why He led me to buy this house." God gets blamed for so much.
12. Christians live their lives on the basis of outward "signs" or feelings because that is easier (in the moment) than reading and studying God's Word, praying, seeking to make expedient decisions, and then taking responsibility and accountability for **our** decisions.
- **Illustration:** Do I take the job promotion and uproot the family and move?
  - You may ask, "But what if I make a bad decision?" You admit it, recognize it, go back and try to fix it. You go through the problem-solving methodology that grace has provided. You learn and grow from it, and your maturity advances.
  - God is not going to send you signs and make all those decisions in life for you. He has made you competent through His Word and His Spirit.
  - God the Holy Spirit is actively involved in your life, but not in some subjective, feelings-based way. The Holy Spirit is involved through the objectivity of God's Word working in you. 1 Thessalonians 2:13
13. A child can manifest wisdom because he's told to, but an adult son makes wise decisions based upon maturity. God treats us as adult sons and daughters in His family.
14. If you have a decision to make among equal options, and neither is outside the circle of God's revealed will in His Word, God gives you that privilege and responsibility to make those choices. We are to live in the son-ship identity that He has given us in Christ.
15. As we do this, we are able to discern and do God's will found in His Word!  
Psalms 119:105, 133a