

**Date:** 03-31-2019

**Series:** The Holy Spirit

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WISE DECISION-MAKING

(Part 3---Selected Scriptures)

Last week we looked at four principles in God's word concerning God's guidance in our lives. I gave you the principles but didn't really prove that they are based on the Word of God. That is what I would like to do this morning.

### 1. **Where God commands, we must obey.**

The biblical meaning of "God's will" is best described as God's moral will, and is fully conveyed in the Bible. It does not have to be "found"—just read, learned, and obeyed.

God's moral will specifies our goals, motives, attitudes, and actions.

#### • **Goals**

e.g., use your spiritual gift to glorify God

**1 Peter 4:10–11**-----<sup>10</sup> As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God ... do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...

#### • **Motives**

= why we do what we do

**Philippians 2:3**-----<sup>3</sup> Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Paul said some were preaching Christ for selfish motives. Not a false gospel, but not for God's glory either.

#### • **Attitudes**

e.g., love, trust in God, humility, gratitude, etc.

**John 15:12**-----“...love one another as I have loved you...”

**Proverbs 3:5**-----Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding...

**1 Thessalonians 5:18**-----...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

#### • **Actions**

**1 Thessalonians 4:3–4** (NLT)-----God’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin.  
 4 Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor...

Often in the Bible, we are given a character quality of God, and, because God is like that, we are commanded to be like that:

**1 Peter 1:16**-----“Be holy, for I am holy.”

**Colossians 3:13**-----...even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

**Luke 6:36**-----... be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

As we said before, we don’t need to “find” God’s will—just learn it and obey it!

Dr. John G. Mitchell was one of the founders of Multnomah Bible College in Portland, Oregon. At the entrance of the college library that bears his name is one of his most famous quotes: “Don’t you folks ever read your Bibles?”

Dr. Garry Friesen said that many Christians are waiting around for some kind of mystical direction from God, when the only will of God that must be “discovered” was **never lost**—only ignored.

1. Where God commands, we must obey!

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2. **Where there is no command, God gives us freedom (and responsibility) to choose.**

This principle helps us answer the question, “*What do you do when there is no specific command in the Bible to determine your decision?*”

In hHis book, Dr. Friesen quoted Romans 4:15:

**Roman 4:15**-----where there is no law, there also is no violation.

He then said that since this is true, “...**the only way** a person can sin against God in a decision is to break one of God’s commands—that is, make a decision outside the moral will of God.”

God told Adam that he could eat fruit from any tree in the Garden of Eden (he had freedom to choose). He could eat from any tree **except one**:

**Genesis 2:17**-----“...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

One New Testament example of freedom in decision making is found in 1 Corinthians 7:

**1 Corinthians 7:39**-----<sup>39</sup> A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married **to whom she wishes**, [freedom] **only in the Lord** [command].

This verse directly contradicts the teaching of those who insist there is only one right person in the world for someone to marry.

“Only in the Lord” expresses God’s moral will (only to believers). But God gives freedom in the selection of which person—“to whom she wishes.”

There are several other examples that I could share where God gives believers freedom to make their own decisions, but **responsibly**—in other words **wisely**.

Dr. Friesen says “**this principle** is both liberating and sobering. It’s **liberating** because, with **freedom** comes relief that I am not missing God’s will (as people under the traditional view worry so much about). It is **sobering** because, since I am responsible for the decisions I make, I cannot blame bad decisions on God.”

1. Where God commands, we must obey!

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#### **4.3. Where there is no command, God gives us wisdom to choose.**

We are never free to be foolish, stupid, or naive. Why? Because, in Scripture, we are commanded by God to be wise in all the decisions we make. God’s **moral** will for us is to be wise. Paul said that we are to be...

**Ephesians 5:16–17**-----...redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore **do not be unwise**, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Yes, God gives us freedom to choose where there is no command, but He also commands us to be people of wisdom.

Dr. Friesen says: “**What the believer** is to seek in noncommanded decisions is not a dot, but wisdom; not God’s [‘perfect will’], but God-given wisdom.”

**Proverbs 4:5**-----**Get wisdom!** Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

**Proverbs 4:7**-----Wisdom is the principal thing; *Therefore* **get wisdom**. And in all your getting, get understanding.

**Proverbs 16:16**---- How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

**Proverbs 19:8**----He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good.

We get wisdom from God's word as well as from interacting with wise people:

**Without consultation**, plans are frustrated,  
But with many counselors they succeed. (Proverbs 15:22)

**Where there** is no guidance the people fall,  
But in abundance of counselors there is victory. (Proverbs 11:14)

**Prepare plans by consultation**,  
And make war by wise guidance. (Proverbs 20:18)

For **by wise guidance** you will wage war,  
And in abundance of counselors there is victory. (Proverbs 24:6)

God gives us wisdom both through His word (Matt 7:24-27) and wise people, and James 1:5 tells us we are to ask Him to provide us wisdom through these avenues.

#### 4. **When we have chosen what is moral and wise, we must trust the sovereign God to work all the details together for good.**

**Since God** has a sovereign will that we cannot know, we should...<sup>7</sup>

(1) Plan humbly and remember that God is the final determiner of every plan.

**James 4:15**----...you ought to say, "If the Lord wills we will live and also do this or that..."

(2) **Trust God to** work all things together for good.

Even when we make wise plans and get good counsel, in His sovereign will, God sometimes allows our plans to fail. But he is working all things together for our good and to accomplish His divine purposes (Romans 8:28).

**Os Guinness** has wisely observed: "As believers we cannot always know why, but *we can always know why we trust God who knows why*, and this makes all the difference."

(3) **Remember that** He only requires us to be moral and wise.  
He will secretly guide everything else.

Dr. Friesen tells the story of a layman in Arkansas who tried to start a church and sacrificed five years of his life to help get it off the ground.

Unfortunately, the church failed. His friends inadvertently rubbed the salt of guilt into his wound of disappointment. *“The failure shows that it was not God’s will in the first place,”* they said. *“You should have known that.”* He wondered if his failure might simply be explained by God’s sovereignty. Dr. Friesen told him that God would reward his faithful efforts, not just his “successes.”

**(Application/Closing comments)**

~~Acts 1:1-5——1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. 4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”~~

~~John 1:1-5~~