

Discerning the Will of God

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from EO Sources)

Introduction:

- A. "What is God's will for my life?"
 - 1. What Christian has not asked this question?
 - a. Mate, job, home, etc.
 - 2. We want to live in harmony with God's will - Rom. 1:9-10
- B. How can we discern God's will for us in critical decisions or even day to day matters?
 - 1. We must be diligent to practice God's will as revealed in His Word
 - 2. We must be careful to permit ourselves only those things in which God has granted liberty
 - 3. We must avoid being dogmatic in matters of God's Providence.
- C. Stop saying of evil "It was God's will."
 - 1. "It was God's will that my wife got cancer."
 - a. Really? How do you know for a fact that it was not as Solomon said in his inspired wisdom: "time and chance happen to them all" (Ecc. 9:11)?
 - 2. "It was God's will that drunk driver killed an innocent child."
 - a. Really?! God does not will man's evil.

I. SCRIPTURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S WILL

- A. God's proclaimed will - 1Thes. 5:18; 1Peter 2:15
 - 1. Clearly given through revelation of inspired scripture - Heb. 1:1-2
 - a. John 16:12-14; 1Cor. 14:36-37
 - 2. Clearly expected by the Divine - Matt. 7:21; 2Tim. 3:16-17
 - 3. Clear enough to make all men accountable to it in the Judgment
 - a. Acts 17:30-31
 - 4. Clearly God can fulfill His will regardless of the intent or efforts of men
 - a. Isa. 10:5-7
- B. God's permissive will
 - 1. There are some matters about which God is indifferent with regard to our choice; He has granted liberty in such things - Rom. 14:4-6
- C. God's providential will
 - 1. God acts providentially in our lives - Rom. 15:30-32
 - 2. If our plans cooperate with His will, He will bless us - Prov. 3:5-6
 - 3. We should pray to God about our plans - James 4:13-15
 - 4. Our requests are answered according to their harmony with God's will
 - a. 1John 5:14-15

II. DISCERNING GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL WILL

- A. Begin with determining the proclaimed will of God, if He has spoken on it
 - 1. If one does not accept and practice the revealed will of God, what purpose does it serve to determine areas of God's unrevealed will?

- B. Consider the wisdom and experience of others
 - 1. Discuss alternatives with older, mature Christians - Prov. 11:14; 12:15
 - 2. Consult the wisdom of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Bible heroes
- C. Pray for wisdom - James 1:5-8
 - 1. Wisdom is insight developed by long term exposure to spiritual matters that enables us to evaluate situations clearly, and use the options and abilities we have
 - 2. Use wisdom to eliminate less acceptable desires
- D. Be committed to the Lord - Psalm 37:5-6, 23-26
 - 1. Ask God to close the door on your choice if that is His will - Matt. 26:39
 - 2. If He closes the door on your choice, accept it and look for alternatives
- E. Remember that God is Deity, not human
 - 1. God sees the end of a thing from the beginning
 - 2. God operates on an eternal timescale
 - 3. God will always choose our spiritual benefit over our physical comfort
 - 4. God can use us and our choices in multiple ways and accomplish His purposes fully in spite of our strength or weakness
- F. Remember that you are human, not Deity
 - 1. Not all of our choices will be between good and bad, but occasionally between good and better
 - 2. If you have trouble deciding, pray, talk to the wise, and wait for wisdom to come to you
 - 3. If you discover you have made wrong choice, stop and change direction; do not make a mistake into persistent folly
 - 4. When you have made a good choice, perform it with all of your will, strength, and resources

Conclusion:

- A. Col. 4:12; Matt. 6:10, 26:39-42
- B. You will never begin to successfully discern the will of God in all other matters, until you both discern and obey the will of God in salvation