



Discerning God's Will

CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WILL GUIDE US INTO HIS WILL

1. Psalm 32:8

How does this verse say that God guides us?

Interesting that there are three different words for it:

- a. Instruct – 7919a (from concordance) “to be prudent, to act wisely” The idea basically is that He will give us wisdom. The word is used in 2 other places:

- Neh. 9:20 – God gave Israel “His good Spirit to instruct them.”
- Prov. 21:11 – when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge

- b. Teach – 3384 – “to cast, to shoot” Is more of an archery term. “The word definitely has the idea of aiming or controlling.”

Why do you think He would use an archery term to describe how He teaches us in the way we should go?

- c. Counsel – 3289 – “to direct, to counsel, to advise, to plan, to purpose”

The first use of the word is Exod. 18:19 where Jethro gives Moses advice.

See Psalm 33:10-11 – His counsel stands forever.

People may not always give us good counsel, but we can always be sure of the Lord’s counsel.

What is the effect of using these three words to describe God’s guidance?

He says He does this with His eye upon us. Look at Psalm 33:18 – Who is His eye on?

2. Psalm 25:9,12

What are the keys here to being guided by the Lord?

Fearing Him

Being humble

What does it mean to fear the Lord?

Reverence that leads to obedience

Why do you think He would choose to lead the humble?

[v. 12 – “instruct” is the same word as “teach” in Psalm 32:8 – idea of archery]

[the verb “choose” (977) has the idea that something has been tested and then judged to be the best. The Lord will show us what is best for us – not merely good.]

3. Proverbs 3:5-7

What are the conditions given here for Him to make our paths straight?

What would it look like to do these things? (i.e. trust in the Lord with all your heart, etc.)

4. Psalm 73:23-24

How does it say that the Lord guides us?

He's continually with me
Taken hold of my right hand
With His counsel

Why do we hold the hand of children when we're somewhere other than home? What does this picture convey of how God guides us?

So they won't get lost. As we walk with Him, we won't get lost off of the path.

5. Psalm 48:14 (and Psalm 73:24)

How long will God guide us? Forever

[Another possible verse – Isaiah 42:16]

All of these verses give us assurance that as we walk with Him, we won't miss His will.

CONFIDENCE THAT HIS PLAN IS GOOD

1. Psalm 25:10

What does the idea of His paths being “lovingkindness and truth” convey to you?

2. Jeremiah 29:11

What can we be confident of as we seek His will?

It's good for us, for our welfare, to give us a future and a hope

3. Romans 12:1-2

How is God's will described here?

Good – 18 – “good and benevolent, profitable, useful”

Acceptable – 2101 – “well-pleasing, agreeable”

Perfect – 5046 – idea of that which brings maturity in us, keeps us from being morally lacking

Why do you think we fear His will at times?

4. His will is good because God is good:

Psalm 73:1

Psalm 86:5

Nahum 1:7

Psalm 106:1

Psalm 34:8,10

Psalm 100:5

Principles for Determining God's Will

1. Lordship – Romans 12:1-2

We must be willing to do God's will whatever it may involve. Christ must be Lord of every area of our lives.

Is there any area of your life that's not surrendered to Him?

2. The Word – Psalm 119:105

Decisions must be in line with God's previously revealed will in Scripture. God never leads contrary to His Word.

Often a particular passage reminds us of a scriptural principle that applies directly to a decision we are facing. The timing of this discovery helps confirm God's leading.

Are there any verses that relate to your decision? Are there verses that God is using to lead you in this decision?

3. Prayer – James 1:5-7

God promises wisdom to those who ask. Prayer is vital in seeking the Lord on an issue.

Have you sought the Lord in prayer about this and asked Him for wisdom?

4. Kingdom Priority – Matthew 6:33

His kingdom must be our first priority.

5. Obedience – John 14:21

We must obey what we already know to be God's Will. God is not obligated to reveal more until we obey.

Are you obeying Him right now in all that He's showing you to do?

6. Counsel – Proverbs 12:15, 15:22

The counsel of others should be prayerfully considered, especially that of mature Christians who relate proper use of Scripture to one's need. However, do not make the counsel of others' a "crutch".

Who are three people you could go to for godly counsel?

7. Filled with the Spirit – Psalm 66:18, I John 1:9, Ephesians 5:18

God will not hear those with unconfessed sin in their lives.

Is there any sin you haven't dealt with? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?

8. Circumstances

Opened door – 2 Corinthians 2:12,13

Paul says that there was an open door for him here, but he chose not to go through it. Just because a door is "open" doesn't necessarily mean it's God's will.

Closed door – 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18

In this situation, a closed door kept Paul from doing what he really wanted to do.

God may use a "closed" door to lead in another direction. However, do not have a careless "process of elimination" attitude without using the wisdom God gives. To

assume that God will close every door He does not want us to pursue could lead to trusting in elements of chance rather than God's Spirit. Obstacles may be a way of God to deter us or they may be a way to develop our faith.

9. Peace – Colossians 3:15

The word for "guard" here means "act as arbiter". God's peace is like the umpire in our hearts. When we have made a decision that is in line with God's will, we will usually have a peace about it. Realize, though, that the peace may not come until after you have made the decision.

10. Desires – Psalm 37:4

Here is Jim Elliot's interpretation of this verse from Shadow of the Almighty (pg 212-213):

"It does not say He will give you what you want. It does say He will give you *the want*. Delight in Christ brings desire for Christ. He gives the heart its desires – that is, He works in us the willing (Philippians 2:13). This is why He can say in John 15:7 'Ye shall ask what ye will . . . if ye abide.' The branch takes its sap from the vine, the same surges the vine feels then become the surges of the branch. My will becomes His, and I can ask what I will, if I delight myself in Him. Only then can my desire be attained, when it is His desire."

As we are seeking God's will, we can look at the desires that He has put in our heart. Of course, this is dependent on our delighting in Him. Sometimes people think that if we really want to do something, it must not be God's will. What that implies is that God's will must be miserable. While there will always be difficulties in life, we can be confident that God's plan for us is good and abundant. As we are walking in the Spirit, He can lead us through the desires He gives us.

What are the passions God has given you?

11. Sound judgment – 2 Timothy 1:7

The Lord says that He has given us sound judgment or a sound mind. As we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can trust the Lord to lead us through our mind. A helpful way to do this is through using pro/con lists. For further explanation, see Campus Crusade's "The Paul Brown Letter".

Have you made pro/con lists to help you think through this decision? What is God showing you as you use your mind to think through this?

As you seek God's will, you should use many of these principles, if not all. Be careful of using just one of them to make a decision about God's will.