

CALL to PRAYER -

Pray that God's will would be done....joyfully & quickly

Intro - In a season of topical sermons this year. Today we begin a short series (2 or 3 or 4?) on *Discerning God's Will*. I have heard several prominent pastors say that one of their most FAQ is, "What is God's will for my life?" So, we are going to try and tackle this subject scripturally and personally. I want to explore the "HOW" of finding God's will...what is process (or the way) to find God's will. I also want to be specific on the WHAT of God's will - "What is it for my life?" "Are all areas black & white issues?" Can we even determine what God's will is for every detail of life? I also want to demonstrate how to apply God's Word to discern God's will... because God's Word is God's will. But today we begin the journey with *the journey*. What is the right way to find God's will? MYSTICAL MEANS PRACTICAL MEANS SWIMMING UP STREAM

## *Romans 12:1-2 - Discerning God's Will - part 1*

### *DESIRING COMES BEFORE DISCERNING*

- Do we really want to know God's will? (important question to ask)
  - I suspect, for the most part, most people really don't want to know God's will.
- God's will is knowable. But we must first desire to know it and do it.
  - John 7:17 All who truly want to know about Jesus...will know
    - *LACK OF INFORMATION -vs- BIAS AGAINST THE INFORMATION*
  - Jer. 29:13 (Deut. 4:29-30 / Matt. 7:7-8) Prov. 2:3-9
- We will ask this question with each pathway taken to discover God's will.

### *MYSTICAL MEANS*

- Trying to find God's will by Mystical means - *Feelings, Impressions, "Visions / Dreams"*
  - People will say, "*God told me....spoke to me...revealed to me...*" etc.
  - This is increasing popular and is used as way try and discern God's will.
- I would NOT recommend this subjective & deceptive path.
  - A friend told me that God told him something. It obviously didn't happen
  - He just sprinkled his own desires with a self-imposed *Divine stamp of approval*.
    - It gave his preference *divine credibility* because "God told him."
    - Turning wishful thinking into "God's will & word" is unwise.
  - Don't take God's name in vain and apply His name to something He didn't say.
    - Jer. 14:14 Jer. 23:16, 25-26, 36
  - I was told by a church leader (pushing this process) that the Holy Spirit would never say anything negative to you. "*Divine impressions are always positive*"
  - That is "*fortune cookie christianity*" - no different than a horoscope/palm reader
- Beware of using subjective feelings to "feel out" God's will for your life.
  - Having "peace" about something is no sure indicator of God's will.
  - Jonah had peace going in the wrong direction. Jesus didn't have "peace" before the cross

### **PRACTICAL MEANS**

- Draw straws, cast lots, flip coin... There is Biblical precedence for this process.
  - Prov. 16:33 We don't believe in luck or chance...we believe in God! Eph. 1:11; Rom 11:36...even lots
  - Decisions by lot – Land allotment...Finding the wrong doer (Achan, Jonathan, Jonah)
    - Picking a replacement for Judas by lots of prayer & casting lots.
      - Acts 1:24-26
  - *Putting out the fleece* - (Judges 6:36-40)
- If you take this route...ask yourself, "*Do I really want to know God's will?*"
  - ...Or is it best 2 out 3 if you don't like the first lot?
  - Are you looking for God's will or just a confirmation of your own will?

### **SWIMMING UP STREAM**

- There is a way to find God's will.
  - Rom. 12:1-2
  - The world is floating downstream. (floating the Illinois - party rafts on the river)
    - God's will is for us to swim upstream and not "go with the flow."
  - You can't find God's will by being conformed to the world.
  - God's will is to go against the grain and swim upstream. (Matt. 7:13-14)
    - The way to God's will is the way less traveled.
    - The path to God's will is NOT the well beaten path.
  - If you desire to discern the will of God for your life – DON'T BE LIKE THE WORLD.
- Eph. 5:10
  - We don't learn what pleases the Lord by being like the world.
  - James 4:4
  - 1 John 2:15-17 we're not to like the world much less be like the world
    - Most people don't really want to know God's will because it is contrary to the world. (God's will is not conventional wisdom – 1 Cor. 1:21)
    - *God's will* will put you in opposition to the world.
- Those desiring *God's will* will be directed to God's will.
  - Prov. 3:5-6
  - Romans 8:14
  - Isaiah 30:20-21
  - Pillar of cloud by day & pillar of fire by night. (Ex. 13:20-21)

### **REPENT & BELIEVE**

- It is God's will that we repent and believe.
  - Acts 17:30-31
  - 2 Peter 3:9
- Repentance will get you on the right path to discern God's will.