

Discerning the Will of God: Practical Steps to Divine Direction

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[0:00] Talking about the will of God, it's something we all need to find, isn't it, to know God's will. I know when Saul, as he became Paul, was on the Damascus road, the first thing he asked God was, what would you have me to do? What would you have me to do? Finding the will of God, it's something we all should want to do, isn't it?

Now the notes are very deep and thorough, we're just going to really gloss over them. So for those at home as well, you can see the notes, the link to the notes just there.

We will be glossing over them because it's very intensive material, but we'll touch on the main points. We're talking about really, I guess, practical steps and spiritual disciplines to make decisions that glorify God, to use our life to glorify him as the main thing.

And it's really something we all need to know, to discern the will of God, to find what is God's will for my life. And you think of all the choices we face through life, whether careers or relationships, what ministry callings, how we use our funds, our lives, our daily responsibilities, how to find that divine direction for life.

And the first scripture there you see, it tells us there in Proverbs 3, verses 5 and 6, Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, lean not unto thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

[1:29] It's a timeless promise, isn't it? When you think of your life as you start it, it's really a blank canvas, isn't it? And we're starting out, we want God to show us the way to live, which way to go, which way to take through life.

And God wants that for his children to guide us. And he's given us his word, which is a great resource for us, as it tells us of the word of God, Psalm 119, verse 105.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. So a light unto my feet, like what my immediate is, and then a light unto my path, as in the future, what lies ahead.

And it's God's will that we learn his will and that we find the steps to take through his word. And tonight we're talking about like a framework, you could say, of finding God's will based on his word. Isaiah 30 tells us a similar concept of God's leading us, where you can hear his voice, as it were. But he's saying this is the way, walking in it, when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left, that you find his will, the way to go.

[2:38] And that's what God wants for us. He's a loving father who wants to guide his children. And the question is, are we listening to his voice? Which, of course, the voice is right here in black and white and red, the word of God.

And that's the sure guide for his will. So, of the will of God then, what is the nature of God's will? It's multifaceted, you could put it, there's, if you like, three dimensions.

God's sovereign will, in other words, his eternal decrees, what the word of God tells us. His revealed will, the commands from scripture. And then his specific will, more individually, his personal direction of each one of us.

And so I'll unpack some of those things tonight. Firstly, then, God's sovereign will. So God's sovereign will, when you think of sovereign as in his control, his overshadowing, his overarching, watching over us.

It's his eternal, unchangeable plan, which he has established before the foundation of the world. You see that scripture there, before the former things evolved, for I am God, there is none else.

[3:48] I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning. My counsel shall stand, and I'll do all my pleasure. Think of God's will.

It encompasses his decrees for creation, redemption, and history. It tells us he is the one who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

He can see the future, and he knows what will happen. We see it in the crucifixion of Christ, where Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

And the will of God is immutable, so it's not changing. And it's often hidden until fulfilled. You could think of the example of Joseph and his brothers, as he testified to them when he revealed himself, and they were ashamed.

He says, What God had allowed and made possible that Joseph became the deliverer of his people through all the hardship that he went through.

[4:52] And so we can think of the comfort that we have of the truth of God's will, that his purposes will prevail, even in trials. And we can have that idea that, really, if we can have that sense of his will, it really frees us from anxiety for the future, because ultimately we're in his hands, and we can trust him.

So that's the sovereign will of God. Next one, you could call it the revealed will of God. And it's his universal plan for all believers, and it's outlined and binding for us.

It addresses our character, our conduct, and calling. So some scriptures there, you see 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 3 to 4. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, which means your holiness, that you should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.

So God's will there is telling us his holiness in our body, mind, and spirit. This is the will of God, even your sanctification, your holiness. Next one there, it tells us more, that are revealed as his will to rejoice evermore.

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. God wants us to have joy, prayer, gratitude. These are things that are his will for us, for every believer.

[6:17] Micah 6, 8. He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

He shows that will of God for us. And of course, a very strong cornerstone. Love is the cornerstone of God's will.

As our Lord boiled it down, really, as the essentials here, as it tells us there, Matthew 22, 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Think of these principles. It's God's revealed will. Before we seek specific guidance, these are principles that should be grounding us as foundational.

Are we pursuing holiness? Are we thankful in all circumstances? Are we loving God, loving others? And obedience to God's revealed will is the foundation for hearing his voice in more personal matters.

[7:24] Disobedience can cloud discernment too. There's a scripture there, Psalm 66, 18 warns us, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. We want to get that right standing with him so he'll hear our prayers.

As an illustration there, a student considering a career must first ask, Does this path honour God's call to holiness and service? If it's a job that requires dishonesty, then it violates Proverbs 11, verse 1.

A false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight. I think obedience to scripture really clarifies the path ahead. So that's the revealed will of God.

And then thirdly, the specific will of God. It tells us here, Psalm 32, verse 8, I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye.

God's specific will is that for individuals. So each one of us have got that unique decisions that we need to make for our own lives. Who are we going to marry if we do? Where to work?

[8:28] How to serve? Personal guidance. And it requires a mind renewed by scripture. Romans 12, 2 talks about how we should be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

We want to have the mind to serve, to hear God, to do his will. And it says that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

And then you've got the Holy Spirit's illumination too. As our Lord says in John 16, 13, How be it when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

We've got the leading of God's spirit. And so you've got the scripture and the spirit. And then you've got our own circumstances. And the Holy Spirit will impress on us through convictions or impressions.

But it will always be in harmony with God's word. Some people may lightly say, well, God told me this or God told me that. Well, it's got to be in accord with the word of God as the essential.

[9:29] Otherwise, it could be some other voice or some other impression. Now, we see an example where the Holy Spirit directed Philip, the evangelist. In Acts 8, the spirit directed Philip to the Ethiopian's chariot.

Then the spirit said unto Philip, go near and join thyself to this chariot. So it was in accord with God's will for God's mission for Philip. You can think of other examples.

In Genesis 24, Abraham's servant saw a wife for Isaac. And he prayed for specific guidance. He asked for a sign. And then we saw Rebecca's kindness in offering the water.

And so it was all fitting in harmony. A blending of prayer, providence and alignment with God's revealed will. Similarly, we can seek specific guidance within the scripture's boundaries.

Trusting the Lord to lead us through by his spirit and circumstances. Could all think of maybe there's some areas of my own life. Are they lining up with God's revealed will? That will bless my life and honour him.

[10:31] Next section, biblical principles for decision making. So we're going to look at some various principles. Six biblical principles here that can give us a bit of a framework as far as principles that are Bible based to help us with decision making.

We're going to go through those six principles there as shown on the screen there to ensure that we're making choices that reflect God's character and his purposes and fit with what the Bible tells us.

So this is just some handy hints, if you like, how we can have such principles working in our own life when we're faced with a decision to make. So the first one you see there is prayer.

And we should seek God through prayer. It's kind of a natural thing that we ought to do, isn't it? To get God's will, to find his leading. Of course, it tells us there, Philippians 4, verse 6 through 7.

Be careful for nothing else. Don't be anxious about stuff. But in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

[11:42] So we want to make sure that we're lining up our hearts with God and we're presenting our requests accordingly. Another scripture there, James 1, about prayer. If any one of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not.

He's not going to scold you for it. He's going to give you liberally and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. You see their fervent prayer again in faith, asking God for wisdom and peace.

As a Bible example, you could think of Nehemiah. He faced this daunting task. He had to approach the king. And in Nehemiah 2, verse 4, You wonder how he did that at the time.

It was like a prayer that he instantly prayed as he was approaching the king. So it was that prayerfulness before he answered. He had that brief, heartfelt prayer and it led to God's blessing.

Likewise, we can bathe our decisions in prayer. So the first one there, seek God through prayer. Second one, we can search the scriptures. Our ultimate authority.

[12:56] As we know, all scripture is given by inspiration of God. It's profitable in all of those capacities that will be thoroughly furnished. So every decision that we make, we ought to rest in the scriptures, test

it against the scriptures.

And there's some things that clearly will not be God's will that we can be clearly mindful of. For example, an obvious one, 2 Corinthians 6.14, being not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. So if we're considering marriage, for one thing, a relationship with an unbeliever contradicts that clear scripture. So that's an unbeliever, if you're a single person looking for a spouse, that rules out anyone who's not a fellow believer to yoke up with.

And then, of course, ministry opportunities. Does it line up with the commission that we have, the Great Commission? Go ye therefore and teach all nations. Reaching souls for Christ.

That's a fundamental. That should be something that we should always have in our mind. And then regular Bible study, that sharpens discernment too. If we can hide God's word in our heart, we can be better guided.

[14:08] As we immerse ourselves in scripture, we can understand. Because those scriptural principles will be locked in our heart. They'll be in our mind. They'll be guiding our decision making naturally.

Because they'll be internalised, God's principles for every situation. As an example of the scriptures, we see Joshua's leadership decisions were grounded in God's word. As the commission came there for Joshua, This book of the law shall not depart out of my mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

He was grounded in the scripture in God's word. And it led to his success. Likewise, let the scriptures guide our decisions, our choices. So we've seen prayer, we've seen the scriptures. Third one, seek godly counsel. Seek godly counsel. It's really good when you're facing a decision to bounce it off others that you trust, other godly, mature believers.

It tells us in Proverbs, numbers of times about counsel. For example here, Proverbs 15, 22. Without counsel, purposes are disappointed. But in the multitude of counsellors, they are established.

[15:19] So if you're facing a tricky decision, maybe talk to a fellow believer, a brother or sister. Bounce it off them. See what they might think. Because they can give you wisdom beyond your own.

And give you a different perspective to help you make your mind up on something. Proverbs 11, 4. It says, where no counsel is, the people fall.

But in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety. So there's a bit of a safeguard there when you talk to other Christians and have advice, godly advice from people you trust.

In Acts 15, the early church sought counsel. There was a bit of a doctrinal discussion, a discussion, a dispute. And they talked to one another to get clarity and unity to come to the mind on it.

And it's good if you can think of those that you might want to ask advice from, that you choose counsellors that fear God and know his word and walk in the spirit.

[16:23] As in Proverbs 13, 20, it says, he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. There's examples there like David sought counsel from the priest Abiathar to confirm God's direction and avoid disaster.

So godly counsel can help us get that different perspective. Next principle we can think of is to trust God's guidance, God's providence.

God guides through circumstances like Romans 8, 28 assures us that really ultimately all things work together for good to them that love God according to his purpose.

It could be that God will open doors or close doors. Events may happen that may reflect his hand.

As you see, maybe something opens up. Think, oh, that's an opportunity that God's opened up and I'll jump into that.

You see that as Paul talks about that in 1 Corinthians 16, 9, he says, For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

[17:28] So in that case, there was like a ministry opportunity and it was something that he could see that God was going to use that circumstance and so he went into it.

But then we've got to test our circumstances too against scripture because sometimes Satan can deceive. It tells us that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

So as an example there, in Acts 16, Paul had what they referred to as the Macedonian call. He had this impression, this vision of this call, this need in Macedonia of a man praying, asking him, come over into Macedonia and help us.

And then it says that when he had seen the vision, immediately it says, We endeavour to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. And in the context there, in Acts 16, it seemed like there was doors closed, there was some hindrance, there was some obstacles, but then there was this provision of Macedonia.

[18:39] So that was where he went in obedience to that. Next one, obedience is good to be responsive to God's leading.

In John 7, 17, our Lord says, If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. If we have that heart of obedience, then God will open and guide.

Of course, there's disobedience where we might see there's clear scriptures that tell us to forgive and unforgiveness is obviously not God's will. So we're very strongly instructed to forgive, to have a heart to forgive.

So don't disobey, simply obey. When there's a clear direction like forgive, we should forgive. And also stewardship. Obviously, it's a clear instruction.

We want to not neglect stewardship, good stewardship, but have obedience. Think of Daniel's commitment to prayer, despite the opposition that he had. And we see how he was faithful.

[19:44] He was obedient. As he knew that the law was written to ban prayer. But yeah, he prayed. He opened his windows. He wasn't hiding it. And he knelt upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did a four time.

Even though obedience was going to be costly for him, he continued to obey. And then the next principle is God's glory. 1 Corinthians 10, 31. It commands us there, When you think about it, really, every decision of our life, especially when it's a bit of a balancing, should I, shouldn't I, is that decision going to measure up to this one?

It's going to be for the glory of God. It's going to honour my Lord. It's going to advance his kingdom. It's not going to compromise my testimony. It's not going to diminish God's glory. And that should be really the standard, shouldn't it?

Think of Esther's decision. She approached King Ahasuerus. And it tells how she fasted. No doubt she prayed. And she sought God.

And God gave providence to her, even though that was really a risky decision. But ultimately her obedience saved her people. You can think of yourself when you face situations.

[21:06] Can you see, even if it's a challenging one, that you want to make that the principle to glorify God. Next section, think about practical steps.

Here's some practical things now. I think as it boils down to the practical life that we live, how do we practically find God's will? And here's seven steps.

We're going to go through these seven to help guide our decision-making process. So first one there, surrender your will. Luke 22, our Lord modelled this surrender, even in the garden, and came to that, really that ultimate rest.

Not my will, but thine be done. So he modelled surrender. Proverbs 16.3 says, Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. How can we surrender our will?

When we're facing that situation, how can his will be more than my own will? Even my own desires. It might be even contrary. Am I seeking God's glory on my own agenda?

[22:13] And a surrendered heart is a great start there, to surrender our heart. Secondly, immerse yourself in Scripture. As we read before, Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Colossians 3.23, Whatsoever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men. How can we apply biblical principles? How can we have that heart?

Hey, I'm going to do what God wants for me, and I'm going to do it heartily. I'm going to do the scriptural thing. The third one is, pray for clarity and peace.

So Colossians 4.12, it tells us there of Epaphras, that he was laboring fervently, always laboring fervently in prayers.

It's a great testimony of this man, Epaphras. We don't really know much else about him, but one thing we know, that he was a fervent prayer warrior. How can we prayerfully seek God's will?

[23:13] And when we do, as we seek God's will, he'll give us peace. It says, let the peace of God rule in your hearts. You'll have that peace in your heart when you pray about a decision, that you think, yeah, I'm at peace about that.

And it's a prayerful peace. Another scripture about peace tells us, Isaiah 26, God promises to us, that will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.

It's faith, isn't it? As we have that prayer of faith, he'll give us peace. Next one, it's number four in your notes. Evaluate circumstances with wisdom.

God speaks through providence. Revelation 3, verse 8, again, talks about that idea of an open door. It tells us, I've set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.

So, it could be circumstances will come about that, yeah, that seems like an opening, that seems like an opportunity, that seems like God's orchestrated these circumstances, and he's showing me the way to go.

[24:14] But then, sometimes circumstances may not be of God, because there's an example there of Jonah. For example, Jonah was told to go to Nineveh, and he ended up taking a ship to Tarshish, and there was a ship right there, so he might have thought, well, God's provided the ship for me to go to Tarshish.

So, it wasn't necessarily the case, is the point, that sometimes an open door may not always be from God, because, obviously, with Jonah's case here, it was actually his disobedience that led him in the opposite direction.

Another principle, number five there, seek counsel, seek godly counsel. Again, hear counsel, and receive instruction that they mayest be wise in thy latter end.

So, speak to some spiritual leaders, some godly believers that know God's word, and ask them for their insight and their help to help you make a decision.

It's always helpful. Next one, examine your motives, too, when you're facing a decision. It's good to have the heart of like Psalm 139 here. You can pray, search me, O God, and know my heart, and try me.

[25:26] And know my thoughts, and see if they be in me, any wicked way, and lead me in the way of a just king. Are my motives pure? Am I actually being driven by a godly motive, or could it be a selfish ambition, or fear?

And have that honest self-examination. Examine your motives. And just the last one there, number seven, act in faith. But without faith, it is impossible to please him.

And Proverbs tells us, A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps. Trust God to show you the way, and prayerfully so, that you can step out in faith, trusting that the Lord will direct your steps.

And often he reveals the next step, but not the entire journey. Sometimes it's almost like you get one stage, but you don't know what's beyond that. But the Lord will direct you step by step.

So it could be, for example, you might face a current decision about a job or ministry, about a relationship. You can think about all those different things that we talked through.

[26:38] Are there scriptures that could support that decision that you're contemplating? Specific prayer points. Have you sought godly counsel? Are the circumstances kind of fitting?

Have you got God's peace in this question that you're faced with? Are your motives right? And then maybe have that step of faith, that next faithful step, and maybe get feedback and accountability.

You could think, for example, the early church in Acts 13, as they faced the decision to appoint Barnabas and Saul, they ministered to the Lord and they fasted and the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So the whole church got behind this decision. They prayed, they fasted, they sought God's will and then they commissioned these missionaries for their mission.

And it's like a good picture of godly decision making. It was like a corporate thing too. So having the church behind is a good thing too. Next section, common pitfalls in seeking guidance.

[27:51] Some six principles here. Some pitfalls. When we're wanting to make a decision, there's some errors that we can make that can distort discernment. Some six pitfalls to avoid.

And the first one there is relying on feelings alone. Some people have this idea. They have this warm and fuzzy feeling. They have this kind of essential sensation or this or that.

And just relying on our feelings alone is not really a sure basis for making a decision. You might feel really good about something but actually it might not be God's will. So relying on feelings alone can be a trap.

As we know, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? I know the modern kind of thinking is I just follow my heart.

I follow my heart, you know, as the world would think. I just go with what my emotions tell me. But they can be unreliable because sometimes our heart can get it wrong. And a sense of peace must align with God's word not replace it.

[28:57] So we might be excited about something when really it's actually not really God's leading. Because feelings can be fickle and faulty. We can follow our feelings and actually end up in all kinds of trouble.

Another pitfall is seeking signs or fleeces. Of course, that goes back to the example of Judges 6 of Gideon where he sought to have a fleece and that it was wet and then dry as a sign that God was leading him in a certain way.

God used it in that case. But some would be all about seeking signs and fleeces as it were. It's not really a sure model for guidance because the Lord rebukes seeking of signs as we see here in Matthew 12.

He tells how an evil, an adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. It's almost like a picture of the secular kind of thinking to look for this or that but rather to trust scripture over such things as that to make sure it's the scriptures that guide.

So the third one there, ignoring biblical commands. That's another pitfall. Of course, something's very clear. For example, thou shalt not steal. If you've got an impression you're feeling like you should go and steal something, that's not obviously in accord with biblical command.

[30:24] You don't do that. When the scripture speaks clearly, no further guidance is needed. There's no question obviously when the Bible specifically says to do something to not do something then do it, don't do it according to what the Bible says.

For example, forgive and you shall be forgiven. The question of should I forgive that person? It shouldn't be a question. The answer is yes, we should forgive that person.

It's very clear. It's not negotiable. And James 4 tells us him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin. So there's some things we don't need to pray about it, we just need to do it.

If it's something that we're impressed to do and we do it not then it's disobedience isn't it? We don't need to seek permission. Seeking permission to disobey is rebellion.

And the next one, paralysis through over analysis. Sometimes we can spend a lot of time mulling over something and just never get to it.

[31:31] Whereas the Bible says whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy mind. There's that point of if God's obviously clearly impressing us to do something and it's of God and it's of a blessing and it's going to help us to minister, to serve and you don't need to keep kind of waiting and waiting and waiting before you do it.

Don't hold back. If God's impressing you to do something as much as you shouldn't do it hastily but it's not about that kind of endless waiting to find out what's God's will for me.

If you're feeling impressed and it's a godly motive then it's rightful to go ahead I think to do it in the most part. And there's one there, Romans 14.5 Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

I guess it's just coming to that mindset what is God assuredly convincing me of then I ought to do that. I ought to do that. And to trust God as you take those steps the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way.

So trust God step by step to redirect your steps as well to guide you to lead you as you go. Some other ones there that are pitfalls selfish motives is what I'm contemplating just from myself is it just a fleshly carnal thing.

[32:57] Proverbs 16.2 says all the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes but the Lord weigheth the spirits. And then another principle neglecting the local church it tells us that we should be having that kind of submission within the church sense obey them they have the rule over you.

Rather than acting pridefully or independently have that sense of what is God's will according to the congregation the church setting to. Think of Jonah's disobedience his pitfall he had multiple pitfalls he relied on circumstances there was a convenient ship well God's provided me a ship to go in the wrong direction he could have thought that but of course he was ignoring God's command and he was pursuing selfish motives and then his disobedience led to divine correction and rather than according with scripture as in God's direction he disobeyed in so many ways didn't he you could think of maybe for our own situations just to be wise to that those common pitfalls next section living with uncertainty so there are times of course we're going to have that wrangling in our minds sometimes is it God's will is it not God's will sometimes we might have that need of clarity it can be a difficult decision and not every decision yields immediate clarity

God often reveals only the next step so you might only get you don't know what's going to happen next year but hey maybe I can work out what's going to happen next day or next week have that step by step as it talks about we walk by faith not by sight take action and just keep trusting as God maybe unfolds what the future plan is we think of an example there of Abraham as he was called and he went out and it says he did not know where he was going I know I kind of joke sometimes when I go out driving with Julie that I just go out not really knowing where I'm going but that sense where spiritually speaking Abraham had the calling but he probably didn't know exactly the path that he was going to take or which particular destination to get to the ultimate that he would take but he just went out obeying God and it's the same with us sometimes we won't know really the exact path but we'll trust God to reveal and he holds them out he holds them out he knows what he's doing and just try to follow obediently step by step bit by bit and when there's uncertainty we can trust God's grace as well we know

Paul that familiar one where he had that thorn in the flesh and God assured him of his grace so in times of uncertainty we've got God's grace ultimately and we can trust him to guide to lead and in Paul's case what he wanted God denied him because grace had something better grace had a better plan God's grace and we can trust God's control that his purposes will prevail and spiritual maturity will help us too we can all learn and grow Hebrews 5 14 talks about strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age in other words they're mature even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil of course you don't give meat to a baby so there's a sense where we can all have a different stage of discernment is the picture there but that our senses get exercised so as we grow in our

Christian walk as we mature as believers then our discernment will hopefully increase will have a greater capacity to be more sensitive to God's leading and we can have that growing of discernment so as an older Christian hopefully prayerfully we'll actually have a better discernment than maybe someone who's a newer Christian that might be still a baby Christian but as we have that consistent obedience and prayer as we study we'll get more and more sensitive to God's leading and direction as an illustration of that you see the Jerusalem council they had some decisions to make about what they would decide about the new converts that were Gentiles what was God's will to require of them and so they prayed they went to the word and they talked together to get counsel to discern

[37:57] God's will and then it tells how in Acts 15 28 God gave them that direction those requirements that they were led to instate there and it says as they concluded what they did in their decision making as the congregation of the council of the church there it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things so the impression there it seemed good we felt that was the good thing that was the right thing and so they had that collective process to discern God's will even in that uncertainty and they had that

leading to make that decision and we can face that when we go through life younger Christians amongst us there's those times when even as older Christians we can still have a bit of cloudiness it's not really clear I could go this way or I could go that way and I suppose just cultivating faith when God's will is unclear to try to discern what would be faithful to God what would be the right thing what would be the godly thing and the best thing and prayerfully we'll discern that for ourselves next section we talk about really the conclusion of all of this tonight and as far as discerning

God's will it's really a privilege that we all have to have God to lead us to guide us because the unsaved don't have that and Psalm 37 23 to 24 it tells us the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand as we seek his will as we humble ourselves as we have that heart to his delight in our way will be led by his spirit and of course there'll still be times when we may foul up and fall and we don't always do what we're meant to that God is patient with us too and he will not let us be utterly cast down he's going to uphold us with his hand and the ultimate goal is not a perfect decision but really it's conformity to

Christ it tells us that really the ultimate goal God wants for us is that we be conformed to the image of his son that we'll be more like Jesus he'll be more conformed to his will to his best for us to God's glory as we know as we read before that we do all to the glory of God that we'll be our motivator that decision of my life whether it's what I do next week or next year or beyond like even far into the future is that motive that I have hey I want my life to be live for his glory I want to be living to the glory of God that as we trust him as we obey his revealed will as we obey what's clearly scripture that he will guide us personally in those more individual decisions of our life as we step out in faith that he will direct our path so hopefully it's given us a few kind of pointers as to maybe guiding points in our life as to discerning that future that will of God for us that we'll want to seek it and find it and that we'll be able to hopefully better discern it as we use these little guides as helps to give us that leading that we need let's pray

Lord we thank you that as we go through life and we know there's younger ones amongst us older ones Lord we ultimately really Lord we plead with you to guide our steps Lord we know in all of our life decisions Father help us to listen to your voice through the word of God through your spirits leading Lord that will be led to do your will and guide us Lord in these things and Lord we pray that each one might have that knowledge for anyone who might be listening as well that you're not willing that any should perish Lord that the ultimate will is that the ultimate work is that we might trust that we might believe believe on you our Lord and we pray each one might have as the starting point for life to have that certain knowledge that we've trusted you that we're assuredly saved that you are our saviour and Lord and Lord as that as we call you

Lord that you will be Lord you will be the master of our destiny that you will be the one that we follow that will follow your leading that will be under your lordship and come into accord with your will that will take heed of the clear scriptures that tell us how to live what to obey what to do and then more individually Lord as we seek your will for our own lives and our own individual circumstances of the personal things of our own life that Lord will have that same leading of your spirit and follow these ideas Lord of your word to get clear counsel and clear direction we thank you Lord for all these things for every soul here gathered for our respective lives that they'll be lived for your glory in Jesus name we pray amen to