

Knowing God's Will

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Preacher: Brady Owens

[0 : 00] So today we want to talk about another lie that Christians believe and that lie is the lie called follow your heart.

Follow your heart. Now I'm not exactly sure if this is where this idea came from but it's at least something that made that thought kind of come into the mainstream of our consciousness of our country quite in a big way.

And this is the commencement speech of Steve Jobs. Now Steve Jobs was the founder of Apple, Apple computers, iPhones and he himself never graduated from college yet he was given this opportunity to give this commencement speech.

And two paragraphs right towards the end of his speech he says this, no one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there.

And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it except Jesus but that's a whole other discussion. And no he didn't say that. I say that because he's lost. Anyway. And that is how it should be because death is very likely the single best invention of life.

[1 : 22] It's a life's it is life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you but someday not too long from now you will gradually become the old and be cleared away.

Sorry to be so dramatic but it's quite true. Your time is limited. So don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important have the courage to follow your heart.

They somehow all already know what you truly want to become. It already knows what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

Follow your heart. Now that's a that's a bad piece of advice but let me ask you something. What are what are some other ways that maybe that concept might be restated?

[2 : 36] Maybe maybe people don't say the words follow your heart. Maybe they say something else instead. What are some other ways that that maybe you've heard this concept stated?

Be true to yourself. Okay be true to yourself. That's a great that's a great one. Follow your dream. Follow your dream. Okay. Do what makes you happy. Do what makes you happy.

Life's too short. Life's too short. And they kind of imply this this concept. Pretty much like what he's done here. Yeah. Somebody else. What's another? What's the question?

So he states it this way. Follow your heart. Right. What's another way you've heard other people say something like that but but a different way of saying it? Well make sure your heart is aligned with God. I don't know if that's the same.

No you're saying the truth. We want we want to talk about lies. Give us some lies. Give us some lies. It's your thing. Do what you want to do. Yeah. That's right. Right.

[3 : 41] Do what you think is best. Do what you think is best. Yeah. So this this advice is bad.

Right. And I think we all know it but sometimes I think we need to kind of see a little bit more viscerally why it's bad. So I want us to think about this phrase follow your heart kind of in a logical way first.

Right. So what at large what does our culture teach us what the heart is?

What is the heart in our culture? Center of your emotions. Emotions. Everybody went silent.

Do you think that's it? Well what are emotions? Let's let's do that then. What kinds of things could we say or what are some other words we could use for emotions? It represents love. It represents love.

[4 : 42] Okay. Because because that's an emotion. Right. Your feelings. Your feelings. That's right. That's what emotions are. All your feelings. Okay. Okay. So then what does it mean to follow?

What does it mean to follow something or someone? Do what they do. Do what they tell you. Okay. Do what they tell you.

Go behind them. Right. It's somebody kind of guiding you down a path. Okay. Track them down. Track them down. Okay. You've got some weird thoughts today.

I don't know. It's been a challenge. It's been a challenge. I've got to hunt you down. It's a little investigator in me. Yeah.

I guess so. It's coming out. So if we were to take what we just said and rephrase it with what we know these words mean, what this advice says is let your emotions and feelings guide you in making the biggest decisions of your life.

[5 : 52] That's a bad idea. Okay. Okay. Now why is this a bad idea? What's wrong with your emotions and feelings? They're up and down and all over the place.

They are. Right? They're. How quickly can your emotions change? Instantaneous. That's right. That's right. So this is really bad.

This is really bad. But let's talk about it biblically now. Okay. Let's talk about it biblically. And I want to show you a couple of verses of scripture, just two, that describe the heart.

Because it doesn't matter what the culture says the heart is. It matters what God says the heart is. And Jeremiah 17, 9 says this.

The heart is more deceitful than all else and desperately sick. Who can understand it? So you get a couple of things there, right?

[6 : 53] To say that it's deceitful. That's one thing. What do you think it means that it's desperately sick? Why is the heart desperately sick? What makes the heart desperately sick?

The wantings. The wantings that we have. Right. Because they're sinful wantings. And if you can't understand it, it means it's kind of a mystery to some degree.

Right? Okay. So this is pretty bad. Let's go a little further then and see what Jesus says about the heart. In Mark's Gospel, chapter 7, he says, From within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.

All these evil things proceed from within. And defile the man. All of these things are sourced from the heart.

So when someone does something outside themselves, some sort of what? Evil thought, fornication, theft, murder, adultery.

[8 : 15] When that happens, it comes from their heart. It comes from the heart. So what if I were to tell you that, okay, so this is all hypothetical, okay, so don't get worried.

But let's just say that I was going to leave, okay, I was going to leave Medina. And we were going to get a new pastor in here, and I was helping you get a new pastor, and I wanted to introduce you to the new pastor.

So we had him here. I brought him here in the room, and I said, this is your new pastor. Let me tell you about your new pastor who's going to guide you. He is deceitful above all things. He is extremely sick because of the sinful wantings that he has.

He's full of evil thoughts and fornications. He's full of thefts and murder. He commits adultery. He's prideful and foolish. How many of you would be excited about that kind of a pastor?

That was a tip of defense. Okay, well, I'm going to let that out of the audio there.

[9 : 29] Nobody wants a pastor like that. We know for sure that that would be so wrong. You wouldn't even want to work for a boss. If you were just working at McDonald's, if you were working for the Air Force Base, if you were working for whomever, and your direct boss was somebody whose life was full of these things, you would kind of go like, hmm.

I don't, I mean, if you don't know it, you don't know it. But if you knew it. And so here's the thing. Why in the world? Why in the world would we say follow our hearts when our hearts are full of these things?

You know? Now that's the bad news. The good news is this.

The good news is this. Let's see. Yeah. Think about what has happened. You go all the way back to the beginning. God created man in his image.

As a matter of fact, the book of Ecclesiastes tells us that man was created upright. So as Adam and Eve were there, made in God's image, they were to image God throughout all of creation, spreading and filling the earth with the glory of God, with the image of God.

[10:52] Because they were supposed to produce offspring that would be godly like them, that would be upright like them. And yet they fell. And if you'll remember what the serpent said to Eve, his primary thing he said is that you can be like God.

You see, before this time, they were listening to the word of God and following God. And Satan is coming and saying, listen, you don't have to follow God. You can follow yourself.

You can be your own guide. I mean, it sounds exactly like this particular advice. And because of that, it plunged all of humanity into sin.

And so now we all have the same problem that the image of God in us has been ruined, not lost, but ruined by this sin. And now our hearts are definitely this whole desperately wicked and deceitful and full of all of these sinful things.

And in that moment of condemnation upon the serpent, God made a promise that the offspring of the woman would come and crush the head of the serpent.

[12:09] And we know that as the promise of Christ to come. But it's interesting that in Ezekiel, the promise of what the Messiah was going to do when he came was called the new covenant.

And one part of the new covenant states this. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. So the good news is that God gives us new hearts as Christians. So now we're kind of at a place of going like, wait a minute then. Following your heart's a bad thing because, you know, emotions is kind of what the world around us says.

And so we don't want to do that. Now, biblically we know the heart's got a problem. But Jesus solves the problem, right? And makes us new and gives us new hearts. So why can't we just follow our hearts from here?

And the answer to that is because of what we've talked about before. That when we're saved, it's always an already and not yet kind of thing. Right? Think about this.

[13:19] Are you fully, entirely free from sin? No. No. None of us are. We still are under the influence and power of sin, even though we're no longer under the possession of sin.

Right? Sin no longer possesses us. You can think of it like a war. Right? If we were POWs in a particular camp and the war has been won and our country won the war, now we're supposed to be set free because they've won the war.

But perhaps the news doesn't get to that camp. Right? But then all of a sudden we see, you know, that our country dropped something into camp. Right? And they dropped this big thing that helps us to take and cut, you know, shackles and get out and escape and have weapons to be able to.

But we still have to get out of the jungle away from them. Right? Right? So even though we've been set free, there's still a fight to be had. And one of the reasons that we, even as Christians, even though our hearts have been changed, cannot fully trust our hearts is because we're not fully set free yet.

We still have indwelling sin like a guerrilla warrior trying to get its last little win in.

[14:36] And so as Christians, we are going to have to do something else besides follow our hearts. And so this really, kind of the rest of our time then, I want to talk about then, so how do we do this?

How do we make the decisions? How do we know God's will for our lives? How can we, if we can't follow our hearts, what do we do?

And so with that then, I want to talk about three big things, three big ideas that we need to kind of understand. The first is we've got to understand what God's will is.

Right? Now, you have seen this before on a Sunday morning. I've told you this before. Let's see if you remember it. Deuteronomy 29.29.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

[15:36] This verse helps us understand that there are two wills of God. There are two wills of God. The first one comes in the word secret, and the second one comes in the word revealed.

There's a secret will of God. And there's a revealed will of God. I have called that on the Sunday morning, maybe this is what you'll remember, God's will of demands and God's will of decrees.

The decrees are the secret things. The demands are the revealed things. Now, let's just pause for a second and see if we can make sure we understand what these two things mean.

Okay? So if I say a secret will of God that is his will of decrees, what might that be talking about? Decrees?

Like what? Like what? Maybe I shouldn't talk. No, no, I just didn't hear you. To me, a decree is something that's been revealed to us, and it's, we know what it is, like the Ten Commandments or something.

[16:51] I'm not sure. Okay, so I would say just the opposite. That something that's revealed and something that's a demand is like the Ten Commandments. It's something we know ahead of time, right?

A secret thing is something he hasn't revealed to us. He hasn't told us. So let me give you a couple of examples, and maybe this will help get our thinking going. So when Michelle and I got married, we had no idea how many children we were going to have.

We didn't know how many boys, how many girls. When we were pregnant with one of these girls, we had no idea what her personality was going to be like.

Yet none of that was a secret to God. It was a secret from us. We didn't know. But God knew, and God had planned that even. And it was his delight to plan that because he wanted this human being to be that way and to be born in this century, on this continent, in this state, to this family.

And so those are the secret things of God, right? And we could go on and on about those kinds of things, right? You could talk about things like where you will grow up and who your friends will be.

[18:00] You could talk about things like what job should you have and how are you rigged in terms of those things. Sometimes you get to see, but most of the time you get to see them kind of in retrospect rather than before it happens.

The revealed things, the demanded things of God, these are commands he tells us. Like, for instance, in Thessalonians, it says, this is God's will for you, your sanctification.

God wants you to be sanctified. That's his revealed will, right? The Ten Commandments. He says, you shall not murder. That is God's will for your life.

He wants you to not murder people. He wants you to protect life. So let me just pause there. Can you give me some other examples of revealed will versus secret will?

Now that you kind of heard what I'm saying. Well, to me, what you've been talking about is the fact that we have a passion, so to speak.

[19:07] Those are the things that have been revealed to us. As you were talking about your family. Or we, our family, we all know that. But what is the future?

What is going to happen to those family members? To us? Those are the secret things that God knows, but we don't.

That's right. And they will be revealed, as I say, at the appropriate time. Right. Usually as it's happening. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Sometimes it's a surprise. Sometimes it's a very pleasing thing. Yeah. Of course, I've got a lot of the revealed things from now. I don't know what's ahead in the secret, but you still have some. Okay. Good.

That's a good example of the secret will, the will of decree. What about an example of the revealed will, the will of demands or commands? What's an example of that?

[20:09] Is that the same commandment? Yeah. Pray without ceasing.

Pray without ceasing. Excellent. Love one another. Bear one another's burdens. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves. Anything in scripture that is a command from God to us is a part of his revealed will.

Okay. Now, I'm 53. Actually, no, I'm not 53. I'm 52 and I'm about to turn 53. However, however, I don't know.

I don't know at what age I should retire. And as I begin to look at that and begin to ask myself, when should I retire?

How do I make such a decision? So often, the world would tell us, follow your heart. Well, what do you want to do?

[21:17] It's like, well, I'm not sure that's the best advice there. But then we'll say, well, so what does God want me to do? And then we have the problem of like, well, how is God, how am I going to get God to tell me?

God, is there a magic number? Is it 70, 71, 72? Is it 73 and a half? Is it 80? It's not 53. Well, it's not 53. Well, what if it is? What if it is?

You know, what if he were to say, you know, and so how do I know that? Do I listen for a voice? Do I wait for a feeling? You just have to pray about it.

It's a burden. It's a burden. It's a burden. It's still in your heart. He'll tell you. Well, I'm actually going to talk about how to do that. But this is a good thing because we come up to these kinds of questions all the time.

The younger you are, the more questions I think you have. The older you are, the more you're kind of like, well, I need to know. But, you know, like it doesn't, sometimes it doesn't turn out the way I thought it was going to turn out anyway. You know?

[22 : 20] And so, I think we've got the concept, right? The revealed will, the revealed will or God's will of demands, you already know it.

It's printed in the Bible. It's printed in the Bible. You can just go open the Bible and you can find those things. What's not in the Bible is Brady should retire at age.

So how do I make that decision? So let's talk then about some false ways that Christians have tried to use to make such decisions.

Okay? Some false ways. And you've got to be aware of these things. The first one is called putting out a fleece. Putting out a fleece.

Now, this comes from the story in the book of Judges, Judges chapter 6, where Gideon is told by God to go attack these people that are down in the valley and God would be with him in order to route them and send them packing and deliver God's people.

[23 : 31] God just spoke to him and told him what to do. And Gideon says, well, Lord, if this is what you want, then make the fleece wet and the ground dry by morning.

He wanted to wear solid. So the fleece is wet, the ground is dry. And he says, okay, Lord, this time let the fleece be dry and the ground wet.

He waits a whole nother day. Now, this is not an example for us to follow. He is not believing God.

This is an act of unbelief. Because God spoke to him very plainly. You look at all the other men throughout the Bible that God spoke to very plainly. He's telling Moses, go set my people free.

Now, Moses doesn't immediately go like, okay, sure. But he doesn't doubt that it's God speaking to him. And he knows that it's God speaking to him. He doesn't say, well, God, if you really want me to go set your people free, then, you know, turn the flame of this bush blue.

[24 : 43] He doesn't do that at all. And so many times we have a tendency to lay out fleeces. And I was taught as a kid that if I wanted to know the will of God, I should lay out a fleece.

And so I think I said this in my sermon when I preach on this. I actually had this girl that I really wanted to date. And I didn't know if she liked me enough that she would date me.

So I would pray at night that, Lord, if she likes me, and if you want me to date her, have her call me. Or have, when I call her, have her answer the phone and not her parents. And, you know, all these kinds of things.

And I would lay them all out. And it would turn out maybe sometimes like I was hoping. And then sometimes it wouldn't. But the amount of tension and the amount of stress that that brought in my life.

Because I'm sitting here worried about these things. And it's like God never intended the story of Gideon to be an example for us to follow. So we don't need to be putting out fleeces.

[25 : 45] Okay. Secondly, casting lots. Casting lots. Now, the casting of a lot is like the flipping of a coin. It's like throwing some dice.

Okay. Now, in the Old Testament, people did cast lots. And particularly one of the stories, well, not one of the stories, but the verses is Proverbs 18:18.

Right. That the casting of the lot in the lap, every turn of it is from the Lord. Like he's the one that makes the lots work out. So a lot of people would say, well, we need to do that because the disciples did that.

You know, in Acts chapter 1, Judas is dead. And they need a new disciple to fill the gap. So they cast lots to figure out which one would be the person.

However, that particular instance was one in which these men were functioning off of Old Testament examples as well as a psalm that talked about someone taking the place by the casting of a lot.

[26 : 52] So they had some biblical precedent to do what they were doing to some degree. But then what happens from then on is that leaders are now chosen in a completely different way because we have 1 Timothy chapter 3.

We have Titus chapter 1. That gives us qualities of men who ought to be leaders. It's the qualities or it's the characteristics of elders and pastors.

There to be, you know, a man who's above reproach. It's to be a man who lists all of these things. So today, we don't cast lots to kind of go like we line up five pastors and go, okay, we got five dice and whoever's dice ends up on the six wins.

Friends, that's not how we choose our pastors today. The way we're supposed to choose pastors today is that we look at the qualifications in the text and then we examine the life of the person. And if their life matches what's in the text, then they can be a pastor. If it doesn't match what's in the text, they can't be a pastor. Now, there's some other things to go in that decision as well, but I'm trying to get to the idea that as you have a decision to make, I don't think that it's necessarily a great idea to flip the coin and go heads or tails.

[28 : 16] Which one? We don't want to cast lots. Asking for a sign from God. God, just give me a sign. Let me know that this is you.

Let me know this is what you want me to do. If you're ready for me to retire at 75, give me a sign. Because what does Jesus say about people who seek a sign? An evil, adulterous generation seeks for a sign.

That's Matthew 12, 39. An evil, adulterous generation seeks for a sign. Or we could talk about open doors. Right?

Now, I'll talk about open doors again in a little bit because there is a sense in which an open door is kind of a good thing, but it's not always a good thing. Think about Jonah.

God called Jonah to go to Nineveh, but he had an open door to go to Tarshish. Come on, that was funny.

[29 : 11] You guys didn't wake up. God told him to go to Nineveh, but he had an open door to go to Tarshish. So, he took the open door.

And it was disobedience. It was an easy path. He had peace in his heart. While the waves were crashing around and the sailors on top of the boat were all scared out of their minds, he's asleep in the belly of the boat perfectly at peace.

Perfectly at peace. So, we don't look for an open door. We don't look for peace in our heart. Because those do not necessarily mean that this is what God is telling us to do.

Okay, let me pause there. I got one more screen. I got like three or four more of those. Are you with me? Do you understand what I'm saying? Now, listen, I'm just going to tell you.

This is contrary to what so many other Christians are going to teach. Particularly this idea of open doors and peace in your heart. I cannot tell you the number of times that people have told me, well, you know, you will know you'll have peace in your heart.

[30 : 24] And I'm just going like, that doesn't always work. You know? Okay, let's move on then. Next one, dreams and visions.

Now, God used to communicate in dreams and visions. You can see that all through the Old Testament. But in Hebrews chapter 1, verse 1 and 2, it's as though when Jesus came, now that is not going to be the way that God primarily communicates.

His primary means of communication is through his son, Jesus Christ. I don't know about you. I've had some crazy dreams. I've had some dreams where I was killing people in my dreams.

I'm pretty sure that doesn't mean I'm supposed to do what my dreams tell me. And so it's not a stable place to live to try to say, well, how do I do this?

Relying upon feelings or impressions. Relying upon feelings or impressions. This is kind of the reason we're here for this whole thing is, what about this? Do I feel like this?

[31 : 34] I remember driving down the road one time. I'm trying to remember. It was some little East Texas town. And I had been gone for the weekend to a church helping this church do like this weekend revival kind of a thing.

And so it was Sunday evening and I was driving back. And as I was driving back, I had this feeling and this impression that I needed at the next light to turn right. I was like, okay, I'll just turn right and see what happens.

I turned right. The road dead ended at about 20 yards down. Sometimes what happens is that we become so super spiritual about things that we think that we're like the apostles or we're like Abraham and that God is going to speak to us in the same way that he spoke to all of them. And we want that. We kind of want the closeness to God where he talks to us and we do what he says. But God talks in different ways at different times throughout history. And at this period of time, he speaks to us through his word. I'm not saying that our feelings are unimportant, but they have a place and we need to put them in their place. They're not the place where God directly communicates.

[32 : 52] But they are a good place for us to be able to enjoy God. Next, relying on scripture texts out of context.

I call it scripture roulette because it's dangerous. Or people have taken their Bible and they just crack it open and whatever it fell to, they find a verse and read it and say, okay, that's God's word for me.

You know, the problem with that is what if you come across 2 Samuel 11 3 where it talks about David lay with Bathsheba and then you say, well, that's not a very good one.

You open up to the next one and it's Luke 10 37 where Jesus says, go and do likewise. Or pardon the scripture. Yeah, exactly.

Top knot, come down. Do not be wearing your hair up like this, ladies. Top knot, come down. Let those who are on the rooftop not come down is what that verse is.

[33 : 55] Right? Okay. So, so there's the bad things. We don't want to do those things. So, let's talk then about how do we follow Jesus. We're not going to follow our heart. We're going to follow Jesus. So, how do we follow Jesus?

I think I have five things for you. Is that right? Do I have five? Okay. Here we go. Number one, Jesus gives directions through his word.

He gives directions through his word. This is where you start. You have a decision to make. At what age should I retire? Step number one, read the word.

Know the word. Find in the word what you need to know to be able to make this decision. In Psalm 119.24, he says, Your testimonies are my delight.

They are my counselors. All scriptures inspired by God, profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate and equipped for every good work.

[34 : 55] It's the scriptures that make us capable of doing the things we need to do. Matter of fact, Peter says this, seeing that his divine power is granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge or the true knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence.

You have everything you need for life and for godliness through the knowledge of Christ. Let me say that again. You have everything you need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ.

Through the knowledge of his word. You can make every decision in your life from the word of God. There's not a single decision that you'll ever come across that you can't use the word of God for.

It doesn't mean that it's going to tell you precisely the step to take. In some instances, it might. But in some instances, you're pulling together what's called biblical wisdom.

Let me give you... Yeah, let me go back. Let me give you some questions to think about. Because I think most people would acknowledge that we get our directions from Jesus and what we should do from his word.

[36 : 16] But then how do we get those directions out of his word? So let me give you three questions to ask. Number one, is there a clear scripture that speaks to this issue?

Is there a clear scripture that speaks to this issue? And what I mean by that is I mean God's revealed will. Should I become an assassin for the cartels and go kill people?

Is there a clear scripture on that? Right. It's called the Ten Commandments. Thou shalt not kill. That's the clear scripture.

Then you take and you make it applicable to your life, right? There are other issues that we could get into. We could get... And you can... The Ten Commandments covers a lot of ground. It covers a lot of ground.

Second question. How does this clear passage speak to the issue? Okay. So what about... What about the thou shalt not murder that speaks to the issue that I can't be an assassin for the cartels? [37 : 29] How do I know that this is directed towards me, right? How does this passage speak to the issue? And third, if there's no clear passage, then what about the biblical wisdom?

What is the biblical wisdom? When I talk about biblical wisdom, what we're talking about is we're talking about bringing together thoughts from all kinds of places in scripture to be able to speak to an issue.

It's not a single passage, but it's several passages that come together. So if you think about it, some of the issues that I think you apply biblical wisdom to are going to be things like this.

What age should I retire? You're going to have to find more than one verse for that. There's going to be several verses that come into play for that. Several things that will come into play.

The idea of political parties and government and the role of government and the purpose of government. How do I know what my place is in government? What should I do in government?

[38 : 29] That's not a single passage. That's biblical wisdom that comes from lots of passages that are pulled together. And so that's what we mean. We get our directions from Jesus through his word.

The second thing is that Jesus empowers our understanding of his word through his Holy Spirit. So I was like, okay, how do I understand this passage?

How do I make use of this passage the right way? Well, his spirit is the one who guides us. That's what 1 Corinthians 2, 12 through 14 is talking about. That the spirit knows the things of God and reveals it to us.

We know in Romans chapter 12, verse 2, that we're to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. That happens by the Holy Spirit. Colossians 1, 9.

He prayed here that the Colossians would be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. That spiritual wisdom has to do with the Holy Spirit.

[39 : 30] Sometimes these passages that we look at and try to find biblical wisdom, and I'm telling you it's a lot of passages, you might say to yourself, well, how am I ever going to know this?

Sometimes I don't even understand what I'm reading in my devotion.

How am I going to do this? The Holy Spirit directs and guides our understanding and gives us and empowers us to understand the word. So we've got to lean and rest upon him.

The problem is that the Holy Spirit is not in our emotions. The Holy Spirit is not in our emotions.

And what we don't want to do is read a passage, and then all of a sudden our emotions begin to go crazy, and we say, oh, that must be the Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit is going to illuminate your mind so that you understand what's there.

And this is, I'm going to just make this case. This is one of the reasons why God has given pastors to the church because we're taking the word and helping to explain it, and we do that in Sunday school.

[40 : 36] We do that in midweek Bible studies. That's also the reason I'm here where you can call me and say, hey, listen, I've got a decision to make, and I don't know where to look in the Bible for this decision.

How can I make this decision? Where's the biblical wisdom? I'm not sure where to read. That's why I'm here, to offer that and to give that for you, right? You're not just isolated on your own, and I'm going to give you these five steps, and now go do it.

Don't ever ask me again. No, I'm telling you so that when you come and say, I've got a decision to make. I don't know what to do about this. Then you will know the path I'm going to take, and I can help you with those passages.

Does that make sense? Okay. The third thing is that Jesus imparts wisdom for application through prayer. So you need wisdom to be able to take a passage of Scripture and apply it to your life.

You've got to have that insight. This is Daniel, right? You've got to have that insight, that understanding, that wisdom. You see what the Word says, and you go like, how do I live this out? That's what wisdom is.

[41 : 49] And we get that wisdom because we pray and ask God for that wisdom. That's what James says. If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Psalm 25 says, make me know your paths, O Lord, teach me. Make me know your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths. When we pray about a decision, we shouldn't be praying, God, tell me what I need to do.

I know we're tempted to want to do that. But what we need to pray is, Lord, give me wisdom and help me know how to do this. As a matter of fact, we could say a couple of things here. Number one, we could say, God, give me your spirit to help me understand what your Word says about this issue.

Okay, that's the first thing we can do. Lord, I need help from your spirit to understand the passages about this decision. The second thing we can pray is, God, give me wisdom to apply what the Holy Spirit shows me in your Word.

Okay, so one is I need to understand it. One is I need to apply it. But here's the third thing we pray. God, give me the courage to face the consequences of this decision.

[43 : 09] Give me the courage to face the consequences of this decision. Because sometimes even decisions to obey God are going to have consequences. Every decision does.

And those consequences could be good and right and wonderful and beautiful and sweet. And like the disciples, they obeyed Jesus, got in the boat, and started to go to the other side of the lake. And then they are all of a sudden in the storm and thought they were going to die.

Right? They were obedient to Jesus, and now they're going to die. Right? They had to have the courage to face those consequences, doing the things that God's called them to do. We've got to pray and ask God to help us understand, help us to apply, and help us to have the courage to live it out.

Fourth, Jesus increases wisdom through wise, godly counsel. So not only do you need to look at the Scriptures, try to understand it, try to apply it to your life.

Ask godly people. Okay, do not ask Dear Abby. Do not ask Reddit. And do not ask Facebook. You are not going to get godly counsel from those places.

[44 : 16] You need to come to your Christian brothers and sisters. You need to come to your pastors, your deacons. And you need to ask them. Say, listen, I have this decision. Here are the passages that I've been looking at.

Here's what I feel like I need to do. What do you think? Help me see what I'm missing here or whatever. I mean, the Proverbs are full of this kind of a thing, right?

Without, by the way, That's that fourth one. Jesus will, he increases wisdom through wise, godly counsel. Proverbs 15, 22.

Without consultation, plans are frustrated. But with many counselors, they succeed. Proverbs 12, 15. The way of the fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

Proverbs 19, 20.

Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days. Wise counsel is not a substitute for reading the Bible.

[45 : 14] But wise counsel comes alongside the reading of the Bible to help you see what sort of decision you need to make. And then the final thing is that Jesus confirms his directions through his providence.

He confirms his direction through his providence. Jonah decided to go to Tarshish. God confirmed that that was the wrong way. By sending a great fish.

And then got him on the right path. James chapter 4. I love this passage. Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.

We've got a plan. Okay, and those of you who say such a thing, yet you don't know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just vapor that appears for a little while then vanishes.

Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. Some of these decisions, we spend way too long thinking about and we just need to live.

[46 : 19] You know? And like this idea of this business in this passage. They want to go to this town over here and do business over there. They're not spending time navel gazing, wondering if that's a good idea or not.

They just say, Well, you know, if the Lord wills, I'm going to go that direction. And so they wait for God to just shut it down and keep them from going. Proverbs 16.9 says, But as it is, you boast in your arrogance.

And all such boasting is evil. That's not Proverbs. That's not. There we go. The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

We're looking for God in his providence to come alongside of us, the work that we've done and trying to understand his word, to open the doors, close the doors, as he sees fit.

From last week, we talked about the idea of forgiveness. And in God's revealed will, you know that if somebody has sinned against you, you need to go to them to make things right.

[47 : 29] So you're trying to live out a revealed thing of God's will. You go to their house and you find out that they've been gone to Africa for two weeks. They're in some place that they can't be contacted.

And they're not going to come back for three months. So your desire to be reconciled to them in that moment can't happen because you're providentially hindered.

But it was good that you tried, you know, and now you just got to wait for them to come back and then take a second stab at it. God sometimes shuts doors, opens doors, confirms things in that way.

You got to be careful with that because of Jonah. Not every open door is a thing. But I had a guy, I had a guy one time told me he wanted to be a pastor. He came to my office and he said, what do I need to do to be a pastor?

And I said, well, let's look at 1 Timothy 3, verse 1. You have to have a desire for it. You got to be a Christian, you know, all these things. And so we began to try to think about how this was going to be put together.

[48 : 33] Well, all of a sudden he disappears. I don't hear from him again. Then I hear from him again that he's not going to be a pastor. And I said, why? And he said, well, he said, I went to this church and I asked them if I could be their pastor and they wouldn't let me.

They didn't vote me in. It's like, well, God providentially hindered you from making a big mistake. So that's a good thing. All right. So here's what I got. I think we've got time for this.

We're not going to try to get exhaustive here, but I've given you two scenarios. Okay. I've given you two scenarios. I want to read the scenario and ask a couple of questions. Okay. The first one is this. You have a young family with two kids. Okay. This young family, their jobs are stable. Their marriage is good. Their kids are elementary school age.

The brother of the wife calls and asks for them to take his teenage boy who's been in a little bit of trouble because he can't take care of him anymore, at least at the present, because the brother, he's lost his job.

[49 : 30] Now his only job is offshore. Right. And he can't take his son with him and his ex-wife is MIA. She's missing. So he just needs some help for about six months to a year.

Do you take the teenage boy into the home? Now, before you answer anything, if your initial knee-jerk reaction is, well, it's family.

Of course they should. That is an insufficient answer. That's insufficient. And the reason that's insufficient is because it's derived from some sort of obligation that we have no idea what it's grounded to.

We've got to go to the scriptures first. So here's my question. What scripture passages do you know of that would speak to this issue?

What scripture passages do you know of that would speak to this issue? Even if we've left in the family, I don't know what the scripture is, but if God tells you to love one another, maybe this kid needs more love.

[50 : 51] Maybe he's on a bad path. How bad is the path he's on? Are you going to thank you to your family? Okay, so...

Help each other and love each other. So passages that deal with loving someone, I would think that maybe loving one another is more about Christians to Christians. So I would think we would go to orphans, maybe, because he's technically kind of a temporary orphan to some degree.

And so true religion is this, James says, that we're to care for widows and orphans. So there's one part of the equation. But then you mentioned the harm to your own children.

Because 1 Timothy 5 talks about when a son or daughter won't take care of their widowed mother, that any man who doesn't provide for his own household is worse than an infidel.

Maybe that speaks to this issue. Other passages? I'm just... What passage was that? James chapter 5.

[51 : 53] No, 1 Timothy chapter 5. So here's the point of the exercise.

We don't really know the passages. Because maybe none of us have been faced with this. Or maybe we made this decision. You know, if we were to do this, we would make it off the cuff. And I'm just saying, okay, this shows us we need to do some work.

What do we need to do? Because I do think you have the issue of trying to help someone. I do think there's an issue of helping with your family. But I also think there's an issue that as a father, I have to protect my children.

Right? That's a part of the call of the father. And so all of those issues are a part of this whole thing. You take a whole lot of prayer, that's for sure. Yes. And that's the other thing is that what kinds of things would you pray?

As you're trying to make this decision, what's one prayer that you think you would need to pray? His will. His will. Will.

[52 : 58] Am I equipped? Okay. I like that better because I'm working on trying to understand his will and yes, Lord, show me. But like, even if he shows me, I'm a super selfish person and I don't really want to do this.

So Lord, you're going to have to give me some equipping and a heart for this because I don't know that I want him in my house. And let's just be honest. Like, maybe I'm the only one that's honest here.

You know, I don't know if the rest of you would feel that way or not. But like, I just don't, sometimes I don't want to have that inconvenience. Sometimes I don't want to have that danger. That's the danger. Well, we have a children's home too here.

There's another option and you can visit all the time. So, so this is, this is, there you go. Seriously. That's truthful. That's truthful.

The thing is, is that we, we've got to be praying like, because, because think about that. Okay. On one hand, teenage boy comes to live with me and maybe my two young kids are girls and this is a boy and that's really awkward and that feels weird and what is his trouble?

[54 : 03] You know, and there's this protection. It's like, Lord, if you want me to do this, I'm going to have to have an immense amount of love that I don't currently have or I'm going to put him in a home and it's like, that feels like I'm abandoning him.

That feels like I'm betraying him. My emotions, that's the problem, right? My emotions are going to go crazy with all this and the prayer is going to have to be, God, help me know your word, help me to be obedient to your word, fill me with your spirit that I can do the thing that you've called me to do.

I think that sister or brother should have asked the brother, what is he giving him trouble?

That would make the scenario too easy. Okay, let's look at the second scenario then. You've been working in the same field for a few years.

You've greatly increased in skill and reputation. Your name is known in the field in which you work and you've been given a job offer. You currently live in Medina. You know what life is like in Medina, but the job offer allows, the job offer does allow for working from home as long as it's within an hour from the main office in Dallas.

[55 : 15] This job will come with increase in pay, hours, and prestige. There will also be a chance for advancement, yet you will have to relocate your family of five. Your kids are still in school, the oldest of seventh grade.

Your spouse's job can easily transfer to any location. Do you take the promotion? Again, wait before you answer because the question is what passages of scripture speak to this?

Where does the Bible talk about this? What biblical wisdom can you begin to pull together for such a decision? I was thinking about like, you know, there's a passage about forsake assembly together with your church family and so you would want to consider what church family you could connect to in that new area.

Woo! Okay, now I'm just going to say, I think most people, I think most people look at such a decision as me and my family and they think me and my family and extended family and they generally don't think of their church family and I think that's, I think that's the number one thing that you ought to be pulling in because if you're going to take your family someplace else, you need to know you're going to some place that's got a good church else why would you go there?

Even if it's more money, why would you go to a church that's not, a place that is no good church when you have a good church right here at First Baptist Church Medina? Just a plug.

[56 : 53] That's right. A minister who's full of deceit. Okay. What are other passages that speak to this? Because there are other considerations you have to consider.

He wants to talk about your responsibility to your family. That's right. Because you take your children, you're talking about what is the school system?

what's the environment in the town? Right. What is going on around them? And, well, I was faced by something similar to this years back before.

Right. and the extended family is also a responsibility. Yeah. Because, those of you who know the family have, my wife's family and so forth, there were a lot of circumstances that would be negatively affected.

Yeah. That would take a position in Boston, San Francisco, Milwaukee, wherever. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[58 : 12] And, you have, just like the church family, you've got to consider that extended family. Consider the impact on your kids. You know, what is it, Corinthians tells us that bad company corrupts good morals.

Right. So, these are things that we would have to bring in and we find out that this, any of the places we would move to would be corrupting to our kids compared to where we are. Yeah, that's something we would need to consider and what about retirement?

You know, you know, my kids grow up, where are they going to go and what about, you know, so, what about the prayer? We're going to pray and ask God to help us know what to do, right, what passages do we look at and this kind of thing but what kinds of things once you're ready to make a decision on this, what kinds of things would you have to pray about for yourself?

For, Lord, it's not for the money and to stay off the money what is right for my family, what is right for, you know, all that. Okay. About money and prestige.

I don't think it's bad for it to be about the money. Well, right? There's a sense in which that's okay to some degree. There is a sense in which that goes bad but yeah, but help me have the right motives.

[59 : 21] Not only about the money. Because, because what should be the motive of any Christian to make any kind of move? Glory of God and the expansion of the kingdom.

Right? So, well, Lord, if I get paid a whole bunch more to be able to glorify you and expand the kingdom, then, all right, let's do it, you know? But like, if not, like if going there is going to be all the money in the world and I can't do any ministry whatsoever, look, I don't have, I don't have all the answers to these kinds of things but these are, these are good exercises for us because we have a tendency when a decision comes across our path to follow our heart and it's wrong to follow our heart.