

The Way of Wisdom: Scripture, Counsel, Prayer and Fasting

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Date: 20 June 2010

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[0 : 00] Well, it's good to see you all tonight. If you're new, my name's Jono. I'm the pastor of this congregation and it's great to have you here tonight for week three, week three out of three of this series that we're doing on God's will, what it is and what it means for our lives. Just a quick recap for you if you are new and haven't been here for the last couple of weeks. All of our sermons are up online, so feel free to go and get the last couple of weeks if you want to catch up. But basically what we've been looking at, as I said, is God's will. And in the first week we had a really big picture, kind of theological look at what God's will is and I said basically that there are two sides to God's will, that being his will of decree that all things happen according to God's will.

So that's Ephesians chapter 1 verse 11, God works all things according to his own perfect purpose and pleasure. So whatever happens, happens according to God's will. But there's another side to it and that is God's will of desire. So you've got his will of decree that encompasses all things, his will of desire which is his commandments, his revealed will to us in the Bible. So the way that he wants us to live and we are as Christians to trust in his will of decree, trust that he's got it all under control and obey his will of desire. So he's revealed commandments in his word to us. So that the constant call for us as a people, as Christians, has been to trust and obey, to trust God's will of decree and obey his will of desire. But what we found really in the first week and the second week was the will that we really want to know as Christians, maybe even if you're not a believer here tonight, still what I think you want to know is what is God's will for my life? What's God's specific will for me? Should I take this job or that job? Should I marry this person or that person? Should I live here or there? They're the kind of questions that we're asking when we ask about God's will, isn't it? We want his specific plan for us.

And what I said was, I attempted to burst that bubble quite a bit and just say that that's not God's plan. God's plan isn't to reveal to you his specific will and purpose. He has one for you. He has a path for you picked out. He has purposes for you and they're good. But his plan isn't to let you know what they are ahead of time. So you ought not pray and ask God to show you what job to take and then do nothing waiting for him to answer because my point was that he's probably not going to tell you.

And the reason he's not going to tell you is because he wants us to live risky lives. He wants us to trust in his will of decree, obey his will of desire and then just make decisions out of that, that are risky, that are focused on the kingdom, that are Jesus-centered.

And that's how he wants us to live. I spent a couple of weeks talking about that because I think our default position is to want to know God's will every little step of the way. Remember I talked about the way that my parents set out that bit of string for me on my birthday that would lead me to my different gifts.

[3 : 22] I said that while that was really cool as a kid, that's not how God works. That's not how his will works. He's not going to give you a string to follow. And so we come tonight to really what I hope ties everything together. I hope tonight's really practical. I hope it gives us real tools so that we grow in wisdom and make godly decisions as we walk through life following Jesus. So I want to pray for us first and then we'll get to work. I want everyone to have a Bible because I'm going to be skipping around a bit and I want you to follow me wherever I go. Okay, so let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for these people here tonight. I love them so much and I want for them and for myself wisdom. Lord, I want you to give us wisdom so that as we go through life, we make decisions in line with your will for us. That we're obedient to your revealed will to us in the scriptures. That we take time to seek counsel from godly people and that we bathe everything we

do in prayer, seeking to do your will in this life. So Lord, please send your spirit, move in power to give us wisdom and a desire for wisdom. For Jesus' sake. Amen. So this is where I want to start. I've said that God doesn't intend to show you his will of direction for your life ahead of time. I've said that he wants you to be bold and take risks and to have Jesus' kingdom as your priority. Remember Jesus, I think it's

Matthew 6.33 says, seek first the kingdom and all the details of life will be figured out by God. That's what I've kind of given to us as an objective for our lives. Have the kingdom of God as our priority and then the other details will be taken care of. But what I do want to say tonight is that I may have deliberately overplayed my case just a little.

Just to shake us out of that kind of standard position that we find ourselves in, that where we sit on our hands and we wait for God to do everything for us. So I might have overplayed overplayed just a little bit and so tonight I do want to talk about how does God guide us through life. God will guide us and the way that he guides us is by providing us with wisdom. So that's what I want to talk about tonight, the way of wisdom. I'm going to give us three keys to gaining wisdom and therefore living our lives in line with God's will. Then I'll finish up and we'll have Q&A; at the end. So if you've got questions, if I don't explain something well, we'll do some Q&A.; All right. So first of all, I want to go to Romans chapter 12. This is our reading tonight, verse 1 and 2. This sort of opens it up for us in the big picture. Romans 12, 1 to 2, that's page 922. So this is Paul writing to the church. He says, I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. So the key to discerning God's will is wisdom. And the key to wisdom is having your mind renewed, having your mind transformed. The idea is that all of us by nature are sinners. By nature and by choice, from the day you were born, you're a sinful person and your mind is trained towards sinful things. That is, toward greed, serving yourself, probably towards money, success, sexual gratification, these kinds of things. That's the way your mind is trained from the beginning. And so that's not the way of wisdom. That's the way of worldliness. And that's the way of destruction, the Bible says. And so in order to walk in God's way, according to God's will, we need to have our minds transformed from a way of worldliness to the way of wisdom. Now you see there in that text, it talks about abstaining from the things in the world and we can be active in striving to live as Jesus and not like the world. But I've got three keys for us tonight. Three keys to a renewed mind. Three keys to renew and transform your mind to having a mind of wisdom and not worldliness. Okay? So these three keys, I'm going to draw them out from an Old Testament text. This is the other text we had tonight. I'm just going to use this text as a sort of framework to help us. And the three keys I'm going to give us, just give you the heads up, are scripture, counsel and prayer. Let's see it. Proverbs chapter 2.

[8 : 38] So we're going page 510, Proverbs 2, 1 to 6. The book of Proverbs is a great book, especially if you're, like a lot of men are, really practical minded, pragmatic. The book of Proverbs is really practical, a lot of just good wisdom for your life. And so it's a good one to get into. And I want to reference quite a bit of it tonight, but we'll start in chapter 2, verse 1 to 6. Let me read it. He says, My child, if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding, if indeed you cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. So three things I want to show you from that text.

Verse 1, Scripture. Okay? God's Word, the Bible. My child, if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you. So this is that, the first way to wisdom, the first key to wisdom is to get into this Word, this book. This is God's Word. We're going to linger on this in a moment. But these are God's words breathed out for us and we're meant to treasure them up. Here's where we find God's revealed Word, His will of desire, His commandments. And He wants us to treasure up His commandments and just soak in them. So that when we make decisions, if we don't have a Bible, we still make biblical decisions because we're that full of the Bible that it just flows out of us. Christianity is an inward out religion.

Jesus says that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. And it's the same with decision making. You've got to be transformed by filling yourself up with God's Word. All right? So

that's Scripture. Verse 2 is number 2, counsel. He says, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding. This is about getting around people who are wise, probably older people, at least people who are mature Christians, who themselves spend a lot of time in the Word.

We'll talk about this in a minute as well. But just fill your life with people who are wise. And don't just fill your life with those people, but listen to them. Give ear to them. Make your ear attentive to wisdom. Incline your heart to their understanding. So you've got to be open in your attitude to listening to others and having your own thoughts and mind challenged by them. So that's number 2. Verse 3 is number 3. This is prayer. If you indeed cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, this is prayer. This is knowing that our God is a good heavenly Father. He's always there to listen to our prayers. He always answers our prayers. It's either yes, no, or later. He always hears us and He is the ultimate fount of wisdom. So we cry out to Him. We ask for wisdom in general, that we would be a wise, godly person. And we ask Him for specific direction as well, that He would guide us through the paths of our lives so that we would make decisions in line with His will for us. So that's it. It's scripture. It's counsel. It's prayer. Verse 1, 2, and 3. Now I just want to take some time now to zoom in on each one of those things. Because you might be sitting here, seriously, you might say, listen, I went to Sunday school. I know about those things.

[12:22] I know I'm meant to read the Bible, to pray, to listen to my elders. But I think we really need to go a little bit deeper than that. Because my bet is most of us aren't doing those things as regularly as we ought. And maybe most of us aren't because we don't know why we ought. And so this is hopefully going to be some good reasons to do it. Flip forward, New Testament. We're going to 1 Timothy.

So this is heading up to scripture now. Zooming in on scripture. And it's page 967. If you don't have a Bible, just get up and grab one. There'll be plenty in the pews. If you've got a spare Bible in front of you, make it available. Because this is really important that we go through this together. So talking about scripture. And I think I said the wrong reference there.

I meant 2 Timothy. 2 Timothy 3.16. 967. All right. 2 Timothy 3.16 to 17. Paul says, All scripture, all of God's word, is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. So that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. That's why we read the Bible. In our search for wisdom, that's why we read the Bible. First of all, because it's God's word. See that? All scripture is God breathed. Every single word in this book came from the mouth of God, inspiring the writers of the time. And we can trust whatever you read in this book, this is what God thinks. Whatever you read about God is true about God. It reveals God. It reveals who Jesus is. It reveals what he did. This is what scripture is. It's God's word. It's not a dead book. Hebrews says that the Bible is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword.

So we need to come to the scriptures because this is God's word to us. But more than that, how does it train us in wisdom? Second part of that verse. It's useful for teaching, for reproof.

That's like rebuking you when you're doing something wrong. Correction and training in righteousness. Going to the Bible is like going to the gym. Got any gym junkies here? A couple? Everyone else is embarrassed. Marcus, you didn't have your hand up? Everyone knows, man. You can wear loose clothing. We know. Going to the Bible is like going to the gym. It's useful for training.

[15:25] It trains us. The gym is a great place to go to, but it's no place to live. So you go to the Bible, you get trained, and then you go out and you live your life according to the Bible.

You come here, you get trained, and then you go out and you live your life according to the Bible. This means you need to have, you need to have a daily time of Bible reading.

If you're not a reader, get an audio Bible. I love audio books. Anytime I'm in the car, anytime I'm doing the dishes, the lawns, the vacuuming, whatever I'm doing, I've got an audio book in my ears, and the Bible is a great one to have.

You've got to get into the Bible every day. It's where we get trained for righteousness. It's where we get trained for wisdom. All right, so that's Scripture. Let's look at counsel.

We've got a Proverbs, and we're going to skip around a little bit, so you need to be quick on the pages. Proverbs are largely a collection of one or two line sayings with a lot of if-then kind of things.

[16:28] If you do this, then this will happen. So we've got a few of them here. I've got three. If you've got an outline, you can follow. So we'll start at page 518, and this is about getting good godly counsel.

So we'll go to chapter 2, verse 15 first. Sorry, 12, verse 15. Chapter 12, verse 15 says, Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to advice.

Another word would be counsel. The wise listen to counsel. Let's keep going. Chapter 15, verse 22. He says this, Without counsel, plans go wrong, but with many advisors, they succeed.

Keep going. Chapter 19, verse 20. He says, Listen to advice or listen to counsel and accept instruction that you may gain wisdom for the future.

So this is all about getting the right people around you so that when you are faced with that decision, should I work here or work there? Should I take that job or this job? Should I marry this person or that person?

[17 : 48] You need to be able to run these things past good, godly, wise people. You've got to have these people in your life. And one of the tragedies of, if you've ever been involved in a church which is really monogenerational, like you've ever been to a church where it's all kids, you miss this opportunity to learn from older people.

One of the great things about this service is I look out and I just see a lot of grey. Hey, no one can feel bad because my man's here.

She's 100 in September, right? So everyone's age just got dropped a whole lot, okay? But seriously, and I go to her a lot for counsel. Someone who's been around for 100 years and who's been a Christian for 80 plus years, that's someone you want to learn from, right?

So especially to you younger people, get some good counsellors, get some life coaches, get some mentors in your life. So that when those big decisions come and they come thick and fast at our age or your age, you get some good counsel.

This is so key. This is so key. And you've got people at this church who would be perfect for you. So get people around you who you can go to and ask for counsel.

[19 : 12] You've got a big decision. Like the proverb says, listen to advice and accept instruction. It's really important that he added that bit. You can listen all you like, but you need to accept the instruction that you may gain wisdom for the future.

Getting around people like this isn't only good in the moment where they can sort of tell you, I think you should go this way or that way. But also long term, you can gain wisdom from them.

Like it says, you can gain wisdom for yourself, for the future. That you can be a counsellor. That you can be a mentor. You can be a coach. And that you can make wise decisions in the future.

I've got to tell you that Renee and myself, our understanding of marriage, we believe, biblically, is that I'm the head of our household.

And so, in the unlikely event that we were ever to disagree about a big decision, Renee would be willing to submit to my call on that issue.

[20 : 13] Alright, so, one out of a hundred, one out of two hundred times, we just cannot resolve a difference of opinion. And so, she says to me, I don't agree, but I trust you.

And I've got to tell you that my decisions are always, always better when they're informed by her. If I just went around making decisions, we would be in so much trouble.

I would be doing prison ministry from the inside because she does all the finances. I'm hopeless with numbers. I can't hardly count.

And so, she does that. And more than that, I mean, just in daily decision making, having her as a counsellor, having her as someone who's in the Word regularly, who's praying regularly, helps us so much.

And it's the same in day-to-day life. We need to have counsellors. So, for you youth group attenders, you've got youth leaders whose job it is to be themselves committed to gaining wisdom so that they can help you.

[21 : 19] If you're a young adult and you're in a community group or if you're older and you're in a small group, you've got leaders who are committed to learning themselves from the Bible so that they can help you and be counsellors for you.

If you don't have a counsellor, if you can't find one, if you don't have a mentor, come and speak to me and we'll hook you up. So, that's scripture. That's counsel. They're two keys. I want to go to the third.

This is prayer. So, let's go to Philippians. This is page 953. Philippians chapter 1 verse 9 to 10. So, this reveals something about what Paul is praying for and therefore, I think, reveals something about what we ought to be praying for. He prays for his church and this is my prayer, that your love

may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight.

The other word for that could be discernment. That your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and discernment to help you determine what is best so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless.

[22 : 37] So, Paul's prayer for his church and our prayer for ourselves and our church ought to be that we grow in knowledge and discernment so that on the day of Christ when Christ returns or when we're called home we are more and more like him.

We are blameless. We've been growing in wisdom and understanding making decisions in line with God's will so that we grow every day to be more and more like Jesus. That's what you ought to be praying for every day.

I'm telling you almost number one on your prayer list should be if you don't have one get one but it should be Lord give me wisdom and God grants it to those who ask.

That's Paul's prayer for his church. It should be our prayer for ourselves that we grow in wisdom so that we might be able to discern what is good that is what is the will of God. Also in Philippians this is Renee's favourite verse favourite passage at the moment Philippians 4.4 4-7 He says this Rejoice in the Lord always again I will say rejoice let your gentleness be known to everyone the Lord is near do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

So that's just a general word to us that everything we do ought to be bathed in prayer. See that verse 6 don't worry about anything in everything pray.

[24 : 25] We ought to be so bathing our lives in prayer that we're constantly asking God to direct our path according to his will.

We ought to be praying constantly that he would give us the kind of heart and the kind of renewed mind that follows him and not the ways of the world. So that's prayer. I'm not saying that God will if you pray that he will reveal a specific path for you.

I'm not saying that if you pray he's going to speak to you and say you need to be a plumber and not a carpenter. I'm not saying that. I've said all along that God probably won't do that.

But we ought to be bathing everything in prayer and earnestly asking God for guidance and then whether he speaks or he doesn't we ought to act according to his will.

Now that being said if that is the standard procedure for us in our lives as Christians that day by day we ought to be in God's word we ought to be seeking counsel we ought to be in prayer and that's the way that God trains us and gives us wisdom and that's the way that God reveals his will for us there are some other ways that God speaks to us that I want to talk about briefly.

[25 : 51] So these are the supernatural surprises if you have your outline. Now I am what Mark Driscoll an American guy describes as a charismatic with a seat belt.

So I believe in all the spiritual gifts that are being exercised in the Bible are still being exercised today. I believe in prophecy, tongues, words of knowledge, angels, all of these things that are in that supernatural realm.

I believe that God can speak to you audibly. I know people who God has spoken to. I believe in prophecy. I believe all of that and I believe that God can and does move through those means. that you can be in prayer, you don't know whether to marry this person and God could show up and speak through an angel and tell you yes. I believe that. We have actually a prophetess here at the church, Miriam Smith.

She quite regularly receives words from God, receives visions and quite often they're about the church. She writes them down and she gives them to me and we've been engaging in this for a couple of years now and she has been before that, before I showed up.

[27 : 13] So what I'll do is I'll take her word, she types it out for me nicely, she gives a little explanation and then I take it to staff meeting, we sit down and we talk about it, we pray through it, we test it.

And I think once, if you were here a year or two ago, Paul Barker got up here and he read one out, he felt that was particularly pertinent for the church. So that is God communicating with Miriam in a supernatural way, she didn't read those words in the Bible, but God spoke them to her or gave them to her in a vision and he does that, I believe that with all my heart.

But the main and sure and certain way that God speaks to us is through his word. We've seen that tonight in 2 Timothy 3 16, this is God's sure and certain word.

Someone might come up to you and say, listen, I've got a word from the Lord and you don't know. It may be from the Lord, it may not be. An angel could appear to you, you don't know, it may not be an angel, it might be a demon.

You know from God's word that Satan can appear as an angel of light, you don't know, you can't be sure, but this is sure and certain, this is God's word to us, unfailing.

[28 : 27] So, to give us a little bit of balance there, I want you to go to 1 Thessalonians. I reckon this is the passage that gives us the balance that we need when we're thinking about supernatural means of God's communication.

1 Thessalonians page 961 chapter 5 verse 16 to 21.

So, he says, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, so there you have again a call to prayer, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

And he says, do not quench the spirit, do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything, hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil.

So, this is what we do in this church, we receive a word of prophecy, we don't disdain it, we don't reject it, we don't despise it, but we take it on board and we test it according to God's word.

[29 : 42] God will never say anything through a prophet that contradicts his word. That is a demon, that is a false teacher, that's a false prophet, but God when he speaks in accordance with his word, and you have the elders of the church test it, then we can go ahead and say, yes, this is God speaking to us.

And when Miriam gives me those notes, they are every time biblical and encouraging and for the edification of the body, so that's an awesome thing.

I think in our kind of church, which is really, you know, loves the book and is pretty conservative, we tend to discount and disdain these supernatural works of God, because we can't control them.

And we don't want to do that. We want to hear Paul and say, we don't despise it, but we do test it.

All right? So, that's a word on supernatural surprises. If you need more, I've got a little note there at the bottom of your notes, because I was going to talk about fasting as well, which is another sort of hot topic.

We're just not going to have time with Q&A; as well. So, I've got a reference there for a sermon I did at the start of the year, I think it was, in the morning on fasting, and I recommend that to you, because it's a great sermon.

[30 : 59] All right, so, the way of wisdom. What is the way of wisdom?

How do you gain wisdom? How do you make godly decisions more often than not? How do you discern God's will for you, his revealed will for you and your life? You've got to go the way of wisdom.

You've got to be in the word. You've got to be listening to the counsel of godly people, and you've got to be always in prayer. And this is a lifelong thing, guys.

This is a lifelong commitment. There's no quick fixes here. The cool thing about supernatural words and why we want them so much is because it fixes it quickly for us, and we are an immediate culture, and we want God to reveal everything for us on the spot, but that's not how he works.

It's a lifelong process of sanctification. That is how God makes us more and more like Jesus, and he makes us more and more wise as we read, as we listen, as we pray.

[32 : 06] So, what are my four steps to decision making, if you've got a big decision ahead of you? first of all, read it.

Read about it. Read about it in God's Word. Maybe God's Word doesn't talk about lawyers or carpenters or plumbers or Jenny or Barbara, but God's Word does talk about vocation, does talk about marriage and singleness, and so you need to consult God's Word about these big topics.

So, read about it, then hear about it, listen to your counsellors, take on board their advice, get one if you don't have one, and seek them out. Get regular time with them.

I do this, I've got several coaches, mentors that I catch up with regularly, and I bounce stuff off them to do with my life, to do with the church, and it's excellent. Saves me from a lot of heartache. So, read about it, hear about it, pray about it, get a list.

One guy once told me something really helpful, he said he's got a piece of paper with concentric circles, right, so it's like a bullseye, puts himself in the middle, because he's the one that needs

more prayer than anyone else, according to him.

[33 : 23] Then he's got his family, then he's got his friends, then he's got his church, he's got his unsaved acquaintances, he's got the world around, those kinds of things, and he prays for that every day, that's a great idea.

Add in things for the day, big decisions that are coming up, pray about it, read about it, hear about it, pray about it, and then, finally, almost most importantly, just do it.

Just do it. Stop sitting on your hands, stop waiting for a word from God, stop fretting over whether it's the right decision, and then just do it. Just do something. Make bold, risky moves for Jesus sake. That's the way of wisdom. Our community groups are set up this way. We have time in scripture, we have time in discussion, council, we have time in prayer.

Our small groups in the church are set up that way, so if you're not in one, please, please sign up for one. We'll do a special sign up drive for the Jonah series. If you're a youngish adult, you can sign up and we're going through the book along with the sermon as we normally do.

[34 : 35] So we'll have sign up sheets next week if you want to be involved. That's really all I wanted to say just to wind out that series, but if you've got questions, I'd like to do some Q&A; now.

We'll just take it for a few minutes. And if you're in a community group, you can probably take time to ask questions in that arena as well. If you're not, this would be the time to ask.

We'll do a few minutes and then we'll wind it up, okay? Douglas.

Three out of three, mate. I knew I could count on you. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. So the question is, take into account everything that I've said over three weeks.

Is it possible to find yourself outside of God's will for your life? Yeah. Yes and no. Yes and no, I think.

[35 : 53] Because, yes you can, because if we look at God's revealed will, he says in his will, it's his will that you not lust, not look at a woman lustfully.

And we can do that. We do do that, don't we? So we contradict his will. We're outside of his will when we're looking at pornography on our computer or when we're spending up the credit card at Shopping Town.

We're outside of his will in that regard. But if we take seriously passages like Ephesians chapter one, other passages that talk about God working all things according to his will, then we've got to say at no point are you out of God's will.

It's a yes and no and it's a two-sided coin and at the end of the day, as much as I teach and preach on this and try and understand it, there is mystery there.

And we shouldn't do what Job's friends did to him and try and just solve everything with systematic theology and put God in a box. But I do want to say, affirm two things at the same time, that the Bible affirms at the same time, that you can be contradicting God's will of desire by disobeying his commandments and at the same time being in God's will of decree.

[37 : 09] That is, you're not doing anything and God's saying, man, I don't know what to do with that. I wasn't expecting it. I don't have a plan B. Things are running away from me now. That never happens. God never takes risks, even with your will and your deeds.

The Bible also talks about God willing within us what is good and pleasing. So even when we're making the right decision, it's God who's at work behind that. I think this is, that whole, you know, God's sovereignty and human responsibility, it's something that everyone who's tried to wrestle with it has wrestled with their whole lives and we've done it for the whole history of the church and beyond.

So probably just stick with that. Yes, Paul.

I was not here last week, so I'm not sure. The question I asked you in walk one was covered, but it was about the teaching sometimes given that people, especially young people, should put aside their particular kinds of education and professions because only gospel ministry lasts for eternity. I'm more of the opinion that Christian ministry is any form of ministry done by Christians to the Lord of God. I wonder if you'd like to comment about that because I think it might be a pressure to put on people.

[38 : 38] Yeah. So is there a special category of ministry which is just full-time Christian ministry like being a pastor or something or can all of life be full-time ministry?

Yeah, we did talk about it last week. So you get the sermon. I think what I said was that things become a lot more clearer in this area when we have our priorities, right?

So if our priority should be the kingdom of God first, the fact that heaven and hell are in the balance, that if people don't hear the gospel then they won't be saved and so gospel proclamation should be first and foremost.

So things become more clear then when you have that as your priority. Your priority won't be necessarily self-gain and whatever. But all of life can be ministry.

Some people do have ministries of just making stacks of money, being entrepreneurs so that they can fund full-time ministry so that they can send missionaries overseas. So for sure. And I also, yeah, I said some more, but get the sermon.

[39 : 48] It's probably more fully explained there. All right. I think we're done. It's always good when the most amount of questions happen in the first week and then the least amount happen in the last week.

That makes me feel good. So I just want to pray for us, okay? So just to round out this series, asking for God's help for us to understand his will and what it means for our lives.

Okay, so let's pray. Father, I do pray that we would trust and obey.

I pray that all throughout our lives, whether we live to where 20, we live to where 120.

I pray that every day we would trust that you are working all things for the good of those who love you and are called according to your purpose.

[40 : 56] I pray that we wouldn't get angry with you when things go wrong, but that we would understand that you are good and that you are directing our path to make us more like Jesus as we walk through life.

I also pray that we would be obedient to your will of desire, that we would know your commandments and love them, that we would be so soaking in the scriptures that we would know what your will is for us and we'd be obedient to it.

Lord, please help us to put outside our own selfish ambitions, have our minds transformed and renewed so that we would make decisions that honor you. Lord, please, please make us disciplined to read the Bible every day, to pray about everything every day and to regularly seek the counsel of wise, godly people so that we ourselves might be transformed into more, and more wise, godly people.

For those of us who aren't believers here tonight, I pray that we would trust in Jesus Christ, in his death and his resurrection. Lord, I pray that you bring all of us through our lives and onto the shores of heaven, where we will worship you forever and where your will will be done in perfection.

I pray these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. I love you guys very much. Please, please be here next week. I bring your mates for the Jonah series.

[42 : 59] It's going to be a great time to come together and learn from God's word again. Amen. Amen.