

Decision Making

- I. The biblical decision making process is centered on how to discern the will of God in every specific circumstance we are faced with in our lives.

Colossians 1: 9-12a says “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father”

The biblical principles found in these verses are as follows:

- ✓ As we pray, God gives us knowledge (epignosis) of his will
- ✓ This knowledge comes from spiritual wisdom (sophia) and understanding (sunesis)
- ✓ The evidences in our lives that demonstrate we are following God’s will are
 - Living a life worthy (of equal value) of the Lord, pleasing him in every way
 - Bearing fruit through good works
 - Growing in our knowledge of God’s character
 - Being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) in a way that gives us strength and power to endure every circumstance which we face.

II. Understanding the meaning of Colossians 1:9

- ✓ Knowledge: The Greek is *epignosis* which signifies a knowledge that goes beyond just intellectual understanding and results in thoughts that have a powerful influence over the knower.
- ✓ Spiritual wisdom: The Greek is *sophia* which involves the right and practical application of knowledge (epignosis).
- ✓ Spiritual understanding: The Greek is *sunesis* which means to have spiritual insights after penetrating thought.

So from this study we can see that knowing the will of God in a particular circumstance involves prayer and study which along with penetrating thought produces an understanding that has a powerful influence in our lives leading to actions which are consistent with demonstrating the character of God. These actions are not based on the difficulty or comfort of our circumstance but are characterized by strength, power and endurance as we are made to be more and more like Christ.

In other words God’s will in a particular circumstance can be found by evaluating the alternatives based on which direction in your life would give you the greatest opportunity to demonstrate the character of God and thus glorify him the most.

Jim Berg in his book, *Changed into His Image* on page 167 says this, “Wisdom is not having God’s perspective of the whole matter before us, but having God’s perspective about what next response will honor Him while keeping us still usable to Him.

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III. Exercise in determining which course of action to take

- ✓ Remember the object is to know which path will enable you to glorify God, i.e. clothe yourself with Christ-likeness by demonstrating His character the most.
- ✓ List the godly characteristics that as human being we demonstrate to reflect God's character. These are found in Matthew 5:14; Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12-16 and II Peter 1:5-8
 - Love
 - Joy
 - Trust
 - Hope
 - Wisdom
 - Godliness
 - Spiritual understanding
 - Sincerity of our purpose
 - Goodness
 - Peace
 - Sorrow for sin
 - Peacemaker
 - Lack of envy
 - Perseverance
 - Faithfulness
 - Longsuffering
 - Purity of our heart
 - Patience
 - Humility
 - Self-control
 - Submissiveness
 - Meekness
 - Gentleness
 - Kindness
 - Celebration of truth
 - Knowledge of Him
 - Persecuted for doing what is right
- ✓ Evaluate the opportunities to demonstrate each of these characteristics in each alternative pathway under consideration. Consider whether God wants to grow you in some of these in a greater way than others. Use a system of "+"s or numbers to help distinguish the differences between the alternative pathways.

IV. Remember the example of Paul

- ✓ Philippians 3:8: I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ.
- ✓ II Corinthians 4:18: So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal
- ✓ Colossians 3:1-2, 17: Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ... And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
- ✓ I Corinthians 1:21-22: Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.