

Discerning God's Leading - 3

(adapted from Kevin Bauder, *Finding God's Will*)

Principle Five: Inform Yourself

The Bible is full of both examples and principles that merge God's will with adequately-informed judgment. God's will was for Joshua to conquer the land, but Joshua still sent investigators to gather information from Jericho (Josh 2). Those who hope to pass wise judgments are obligated to gain information from multiple witnesses (Deut 19:15; 2 Cor 13:1).

- 1. What sort of information might you need to make a choice about a career? About purchasing a home? About choosing a spouse?*
- 2. What sort of information should a church have before deciding to relocate or build a building? Before deciding to start a school? Before deciding to call a pastor?*

Principle Six: Seek Godly Counsel

Proverbs also teaches that where people fail to seek counsel their plans are often frustrated, but counsel from multiple sources helps them to make good plans (Prov 15:22). Good counsel results in workable plans (Prov 20:18). Relying upon many counselors results in safety (Prov 24:6). *Not* seeking counsel is the mark of a fool (Prov 12:15).

Of course, if we want to get any help from counsel, we need to choose wise and careful counselors. Bad counsel can lead us seriously astray, as it did with Rehoboam (1 Ki 12:1-23).

These counselors should normally be people with knowledge, expertise, or insight into the kind of decision you're making. They should be people who know you. They should also be people with experience, often older, who have done lots of living and have shown that they know how to make good decisions.

- 1. Who are the first three people whom you might ask for counsel in your most important decisions? Why these three?*
- 2. Have you ever made a decision for which you did not seek counsel, but later wished you had?*

Principle Seven: Consider Your Circumstances

When biblical commands or promises appear to contradict circumstances, then we owe loyalty to whatever God says. Abraham believed God, even when circumstances appeared to make the fulfillment of God's promises impossible (Heb 11:17-19).

It is also possible for believers sometimes to ignore the element of faith. Occasions will occur when God will lead us to make sacrifices for the furtherance of the gospel and the wellbeing of our fellow

believers.

Paying attention to circumstances is simply a matter of common sense. Paul was using common sense and paying attention to circumstances when he told the centurion not to sail from Fair Havens until spring (Acts 27:9-10). When things went wrong, Paul even reminded the centurion that he should have listened (Acts 27:21). Circumstances should indeed be taken into account when seeking God's leading. Simply heeding our circumstances can prevent some very bad decisions.

We need to weigh circumstances with a bit of skill and discernment. We need not take every opportunity that we are offered. We will walk past many open doors without going through them. By the same token, not every closed door is bolted shut. Some may open when we rattle the handle or turn the lock, and others may open later on. Sometimes circumstances may not make our decision for us, but we should always examine the circumstances and take them into account.

- 1. What role do you think that "closed doors" and "open doors" should play in making decisions?*
- 2. Should you go through every open door? Is that even possible?*
- 3. What might God be saying when He closes a door?*