

I. Introduction and Review.

- A. James tells us that we should submit to both aspects of God's will. Js. 4:15,17
- B. Your attitude in seeking God's will is crucial. Pr. 4:23 Mt. 22:37f I Cor. 10:31
Ps. 37:4 Prov. 2:1-5 James 1:5 Mt. 6:10 Luke 22:42

II. How does God guide you? Prov. 3:5-6

- A. God guides you through His Word. Ps. 119:24 II Tim. 3:16-17 II Pe. 1:3
 - 1. The Bible provides infallible and sufficient direction. II Tim. 3:16-17 II Pe. 1:3
 - 2. How can you use the Bible to help you make decisions? Psalm. 1:2
 - 3. Apply texts according to their meaning in context. II Tim. 2:15
 - 4. Seek to apply the gospel in every situation.
- B. God guides you through wise counselors. Prov. 15:22 12:15 19:20
 - 1. Select your counselors carefully. Ps. 1:1 I Ki. 12:1f Col. 2:8
 - 2. Select counselors who have biblical wisdom. Pr. 13:20 Heb. 13:17 Titus 2:3-5
 - 3. Why is counsel necessary? Pr. 28:26 27:6
 - 4. The job of a counselor is to help you to apply the Bible to your situation.
 - 5. Counsel should to be weighed, not merely counted.
 - 6. Good Christian books can provide useful counsel.
- C. God guides you through the Holy Spirit (The Counselor). Ro. 8:14 John 16:13 17:17
 - 1. No where is the leading of the Holy Spirit referred to as a feeling.
 - 2. The leading of the Holy Spirit is moral, not mystical.
 - 3. The Spirit of truth gives you understanding of God's Word -- illumination. John 14:26 16:13 17:17 I Co. 2:12-14 Rom. 12:2 Col. 1:9
 - 4. The Spirit helps you to apply the Word to your life. Ezek. 36:27 Ro. 8:4,13
Js. 4:5 Gal. 5:16f Ps. 139:13-14 John 16:8
- D. How does God guide you through prayer? James 1:5
 - 1. Don't expect a mystical or audible answer to prayer.
 - 2. Don't use prayer as an excuse for an irresponsible or selfish decision. Ps. 15:4
 - 3. Pray that God will give you wisdom to apply the Bible to your situation. Ps. 25:4-5 119:12,26,33,66,73,125 Pr. 2:1-11 Phil. 1:9-10 Col. 1:9-10 James 1:5 II Ti. 2:7
 - 4. Pray that God will give you the desire and ability to do His moral will. Phil. 2:13
 - 5. Pray that God will give you the grace to embrace His sovereign will. Js. 4:13f
- E. Is there any sense in which God guides you through feelings?
 - 1. Feelings of peace or a lack of peace have causes which need to be understood. Rom. 5:1 Phil. 4:4ff II Cor. 2:13
 - 2. You may lack peace because deep down you know you are doing wrong.
 - 3. You may lack peace because you are very cautious or anxious by nature.
 - 4. If your conscience isn't clear, take the safest course. Rom. 14:23
 - 5. Your desires may legitimately influence your decisions. I Ti. 3:1 I Co. 7:39
 - 6. All such feelings must be tested against the Word of God. 1 Tim. 3:1ff
- F. God guides you through providence (circumstances) which reveal His sovereign will. James 4:13-17 Acts 18:21 Prov. 16:9 27:1 Ro. 1:13 I Cor. 4:19 Mt. 6:10
 - 1. You make your plans and decisions, but the Lord controls the outcome. Pr. 16:9
 - 2. He opens and closes doors.
 - 3. Be careful not to mystically interpret all circumstances as signs from God.

III. Will you always receive clear guidance from God on every decision?

A. Many decisions are not as clear-cut and must be made according to wisdom.

1. The Bible does not give you a specific answer for every situation.
2. Search the Scriptures to find principles of wisdom which apply.
 - a. Marriage. Genesis 2:18-25 Proverbs 31 Eph. 5:22f I Pet. 3:1-7 I Cor. 7:1f
 - b. Finances. Ro. 13:8 Pr. 22:7 I Ti. 6:9f Lu. 14:28-29
 - c. Giving. Give as God has prospered you. II Cor. 8-9 I Cor. 16:1-2 I Tim. 6:17
 - d. Education and vocation. Pr. 22:29 12:11 I Cor. 15:33 Pr. 12:11
 - e. Church. Heb. 13:17 I Tim. 3:1-7 II Tim. 4:1ff
3. How can the Bible help you know whether you are called to ministry?
I Cor. 12:13 I Pet. 4:10-11 I Tim. 3:1f Titus 1:5f II Ti. 2:2
4. Often there will be biblical principles which weigh on both sides of a decision.

B. Questions to ask yourself.

1. What is motivating you? I Cor. 10:31 I John 2:15-17
2. Are you being sinfully expedient? Luke 14:27
3. What will show love to others? Phil. 2:3-4 I Cor. 10:33 Romans 15:1-3 14:15
4. What will contribute to your spiritual growth? I Cor. 6:12
5. What will best fit your gifts and abilities? Acts 6:2-3

C. Once you have examined the biblical reasons, you are free to consider your desires. I Cor. 7:39 I Tim. 3:1 Ge. 2:16-17

D. Once you make your decision, trust God for the outcome. James 4:13-17 I Cor. 4:19 Acts 18:21 Ro. 1:13

1. It is good to plan. Pr. 21:5
2. But God directs your steps and determines the result. Pr. 16:9 27:1 Js. 4:13-17
3. Submit to His sovereign will as it comes to pass.
4. Rejoice as you look back upon His wonderful providence. Ro. 8:28 Ge. 50:20

IV. Concluding summary. Heb. 13:20-21

Discussion questions

1. How can you find guidance for your decisions in the Bible?
2. What role do counselors play in your life?
3. What should you expect to receive when you pray about a decision?
4. How does the Holy Spirit guide you?
5. Should you ever pay attention to your feelings and desires?
6. What are examples of decisions in which you have freedom?
7. How should you expect God to guide these decisions?
 - a. Whether to marry, whom to marry and when to marry.
 - b. Where to study.
 - c. Where to live.
 - d. What lifestyle you should enjoy.
 - e. What ministry opportunities you should pursue.
 - f. How you should allocate your time.
8. How does God's sovereign will guide your decisions?
9. Give examples of how God has guided you in the past.
10. In what areas are you presently seeking God's guidance?
What have you learned from this sermon which you can apply in these situations?