

State of the Search for God's Will

Discussion

1. After graduating, would you rather have six great job offers/grad school or one? Why?
2. Is it better to end a failing relationship once one know its really not going to work out or is it better to wait to end it?
3. Why do people wait to end relationships they know are over?

The search begins...

Last time we discussed he "wills" of God. His will of decree and will of desire are clearly laid out for us, but His will of direction... well that's not so clear. This week we will begin to focus of His will of direction (personal will/specific will) for us. God wants to lead us, but why do people find it so hard at times for us to figure out God's will?

1. Option Gluttony

Stuffed with options and the desire for more, more more.

[College students] have gobs of talent and opportunities. the world is wide open to them. But instead of reveling in this freedom, most find it agonizing. The are forced to navigate between competing interests: making money and making a difference, challenging their minds and channeling their creativity, focusing on a career and leaving time for a family, settling down now and traveling abroad for a while, starting a career and trying another internship, etc. (DeYoung, Kevin, Just Do Something p.35)

With so many choices, it's no surprise that we are always thinking about the greener grass on the other side of the fence. We are always pondering what could be better or what might be nicer about something or someone new...We can't stand the thought of cutting off any of our options. (p. 37)

2. Well-intentioned and misguided fear

Paralyzed by the desire to get everything right.

We may have the best of intentions in trying to discern God's will, but we should really stop putting ourselves through the misery of overspiritualizing every decision. Our misdirected piety makes following God more mysterious than it was meant to be. (p.28)

I've known impetuous Christians, but in my personal experience I've seen more who are paralyzed by indecision and inactivity. They refuse to make a decision without all the facts and an almost complete assurance that everything will turn out fine. (p. 28)

Some Christians have the best intentions in seeking out God's will. They are just too cautious and a little fainthearted. Such Christians need admonition, but they also need patience and help. (p.29)

3. Expecting the expected

Assuming perfection in an imperfect world.

...many of us expect too much out of life. We've assumed that we'll experience heaven on earth, and then we get disappointed when earth seems so unheavenly. We have little longing left for our reward in the next life because we've come to expect such rewarding experiences in this life, and when every experience and situation must be rewarding and put us on the road to complete fulfillment, then suddenly the decisions about where we live, what house we buy, what dorm we're in ... take on weighty significance. There's just too much riding on every decision. (p. 32)

Many of us -men and women- are extremely passive and cowardly. We don't take risks for God because we are obsessed with safety, security, and most of all, with the future. That's why most of our prayers fall into one of two categories. Either we ask that everything would be fine or we ask to know that everything will be fine. (p. 40)

...God doesn't take risks, so we can. (p. 41)

4. Discernment via Circumvention

Avoiding the right option because it's wrong for us.

The problem becomes compounded when Christians justify foolish behavior to others by announcing it was God's decision, not theirs. And so, inadvertently, the traditional view tends to actually encourage immaturity. For it provides a means of defending unwise behavior that can be neither verified nor critiqued by the scrutiny of others. (p. 84-85 Decision Making and the Will of God, Friesen, Garry, 2004)

"...[A] consequence is that circumstances come to dominate the decision to a greater and greater degree. With the passing of time, some alternatives maybe eliminated. Or the circumstances surrounding the decision may become altered, forcing the decision maker to make adjustments that would not have been required had he acted earlier. (p.85)

We make decisions in a vacuum because we lack consistent contact with people who know us well and can give us sound advice about our strengths and weakness. Participation in a real community can turn what might appear to be difficult choices into easy ones, complex choices into simple ones. Community informs, clarifies, and illumines, but only if we belong to such a community. (p. 50 The Will of God as a Way of Life Sittser, Jerry, 2000)

Discussion Questions

"What is the reason its taking us so long to figure out God's will?"

- Is it because we have given ourselves too many options?
- Is it because we are waiting for all the signs to point to the right direction?
- Is it because we are afraid of choosing the hard path?
- Or is it because we honestly know what we should do, but we think we know better than God?