

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 8/1/93 PM
Romans 8:27 "The Work of the Spirit and the Will of God"

Overview of Series:

"The Will of God and the Word of God" Ephesians 5:17
"How to Find the Will of God" Romans 12:1-2
"Why Plan If God Has A Will?" Romans 15:32
"A Model for Decision-Making" I John 2:17
"The Work of the Spirit and the Will of God" Romans 8:27
"The Place of Prayer in the Will of God" Colossians 4:12

Communion:

Intro:

Suppose you and your wife are sitting on the living room couch. You've been discussing a major decision for weeks, and now it's come to a head. Here's your dilemma. Your child wants to buy a mini-bike. And the two of you can't agree on what to do. What decision should you make? Finally, you say to your spouse, "Dear, we both love the Lord, and we both want to do His will in this decision. So let's pray about it for a week. Let's ask His Spirit to guide us to make the right decision. Then we'll get talk about it and make the decision."

A week later there you are on the same couch. You both have prayed for the Spirit's leading. You feel He has given you a sense of inner peace in the matter. You think it would be fine for your child to make the purpose. But before you say anything, you ask your spouse, "Have you prayed for the Spirit's leading in this decision?" Yes. "What do you think the Spirit is leading us to do?" And then your spouse says, "The Spirit made it clear to me that...it's not God's will for our child to buy that mini-bike!"

Have you and your spouse ever shortcircuited like that in a decision?

Tonight we're going to explore a very important question.

Q: How does the Holy Spirit lead us? What part does the Spirit play in decision-making for the Christian?

Review: "Decision-Making and the Will of God"

Week #1:

God's Will will never contradict God's Word.

Week #2: Romans 12:1-2 To understand the Will of God, I must...

Principle #1: I must be in the place of Total Surrender to God.

Principle #2: I must be aware of the Conflict of Values.

Principle #3: I must emphasize the importance of my Mind, and not my Feelings.

Principle #4: I must evaluate the alternatives with these questions...

Week #3: Principles about Decision-Making from Paul's Experience in Romans 15:

1. It's OK for me to PLAN. God often utilizes our plans to accomplish His Will.
2. I must make sure my plans reflect God's Revealed Will.
3. I must submit my plans to God's purposes and timing.
4. I must not be intimidated by Roadblocks.
5. Prayer is a vital part of the Decision-making process.
6. I must seek ways to invest my life in God's service.

Week #4: "A Model for Decision-Making"

I. Assumptions in Decision-Making:

- #1 God's Word is sufficient.
- #2 God is NOT now revealing Himself in Special Revelation.
See: Heb 1:1-2; 2:1-4; II Tim 3:16-17; II Pt 1:3
- #3 God's Will is always consistent with God's Word.
- #4 My Choices reveal my Values.

II. The Question to ask in Decision-Making (H. Robinson)

The Wrong Question: How can I know God's Will?

The Right Question: How can I make a Good Decision?

III. Steps to follow in making a Good Decision (J. Grier)

- #1 Define the Problem.
- #2 Gather all the information needed to make a good decision.
- #3 Build Alternatives.
- #4 Predict the Consequences of each alternative.
- #5 Evaluate and make the decision.

Illust: Grier's illustration of man considering job change

Tonight: The Work of the Spirit and the Will of God

Q: What part does the Holy Spirit play in our decision-making?

Let's turn to Romans 8. Notice a very interesting verse.

V 27 "And He that searches the hearts...the mind of the Spirit...the will of God."

Tonight, we're not going to exegete this text as such. Rather, I want us to explore what is somewhat of a controversial issue relating to this text.

Q: Do you believe the Spirit of God leads us?

A: I don't think there is any question about that. The Bible makes it clear that His Spirit is personally involved in our lives. "He leadeth me, O blessed thought."

Q: Is the Spirit of God concerned with the will of God for our lives?

A: Rom 8:27 states He is. In fact, we've already learned that the Will of God is to be our greatest value in life.

Here's the crux. Yes, the Spirit of God leads us. And yes, the Spirit is concerned with the will of God for our lives. But the real question is not WHETHER God leads us, but what? HOW God leads us.

Q: How does the Spirit of God lead us relating to the will of God?

Q: How does God guide us in decision-making?

Illust: How does God make it clear we should marry this girl? A message in the sky? A still small voice? An inner burning?

Obviously, sincere Christians have strong opinions on this, and may I add, differing opinions. So we must go to the Scriptures.

Q: What do the Scriptures teach us about the work of the Spirit relating to the will of God?

Proposition: Let's investigate Romans 8. The Spirit's work in guidance relates to 2 primary areas.

(see Grier, p. 26)

I. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God.

A. Historically, the Spirit revealed the Scriptures to human writers (II Pt 1:21).

B. Presently, the Spirit enables us to understand the Scriptures (I Jn 2:20, 27).

II. The Holy Spirit enables us to do the Will of God.

A. The Spirit enables us in Salvation (Rom 8:9, 11; Tit 3:5).

1. Adoption (Rom 8:15)

2. Assurance (Rom 8:16)

B. The Spirit enables us in Sanctification (Rom 8:13-14).

I. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God.

To illuminate means "to enable one to understand." The Spirit is involved in the work of Illumination.

The Scriptures refer to 2 aspects of this work of illumination.

A. Historically, the Spirit revealed the Scriptures to human writers (II Pt 1:21).

Jn 16:13 "When the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth..."

What does that mean?

Remember, Jesus is talking to whom? His Apostles. He said the Spirit would guide THEM into all truth. And He did that. And they wrote it down. That's how we got the NT.

II Pt 1:21 "For prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

That's how we got our Bible. The Spirit of God supernaturally led the apostles to record the very Word of God. The Spirit revealed the Scriptures to human writers.

Caution: The Spirit does NOT guide us the same way He guided the apostles. He guided them through Special Revelation. Through dreams, visions, and revelations. How does He guide us? Through the written revelation of His Word.

There's a second aspect involved in the Spirit's work of illumination.

B. Presently, the Spirit enables us to understand the Scriptures (I Jn 2:20, 27).

I Jn 2:20 "But you have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things."

What does that mean?

I Jn 2:27 "But the anointing you have received abides in you...teaches you all things."

Our Lord Jesus Christ went back to heaven 2000 years ago. But He has given to us a Resident Teacher, the Holy Spirit.

Notice that John says the Spirit "teaches you all things." John was an apostle. He had experienced the direct illuminating work of the Spirit. But did you catch what he says we have access to? The teaching ministry of the Spirit.

The Spirit teaches us. How? Through the Scriptures. He enables us to understand the Scriptures.

Also see: Eph 1:17

Eph 1:17 "That God...would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."

The Spirit guides us into wisdom. He enables us to know God, and to discover what pleases God.

Key: The Spirit of God enables us to understand the Scriptures.

Why is that important? Because as we learned in week #1, the will of God is always consistent with the Word of God.

Reminder. That does not mean there is a verse for every decision (eg--a verse to tell me whether to buy a Chevy or a Ford). It means the Spirit will help us to use the Word of God, and apply its values and principles to the alternatives we face.

Illust:

Key: The Scriptures are like a grid, through which I filter the decisions I face.

The Spirit uses the Word in my life to guide me. The Scriptures give me a framework for making decisions.

Illust:

Tran: The Spirit's work in guidance relates to 2 primary areas. The first we've seen is what? Illumination. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God.

II. The Holy Spirit enables us to do the Will of God.

It would be impossible to do the will of God without the Spirit of God. Did you realize that apart from the work of the Spirit of God, we would not even WANT to do the will of God?

Q: In what areas does the Spirit enable us to do the Will of God?

A: Notice Romans 8.

A. The Spirit enables us in Salvation (Rom 8:9, 11; Tit 3:5).

Rom 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit...the Spirit dwell in you"

Notice the last powerful phrase.

8:9 "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The Spirit enables us to do the Will of God. That's true from the beginning of the Christian life to the end of it. In fact, did you realize that it was the Spirit of God that enabled us to get saved?

Tit 3:5 "...by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit"
The Spirit of God enables us in Salvation. He enabled us to get saved.

Turn back to Rom 8.

Q: Notice 2 results of the Spirit's work relating to our salvation.

1. Adoption (Rom 8:15)

8:15 "for you have received the Spirit of adoption..."

2. Assurance (Rom 8:16)

8:16 "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God"

The Spirit enables us in our salvation.

Think about it: Here's a great reason to be saved. Do you want to experience the guiding help of the Spirit of God in your life? Do you want the Spirit of God to help you know the Will of God in the decisions you face? Then you need to cooperate with Him in this first area. You need to be saved. It's God's Will that all men repent and be saved (II Pt 3:9).

Illust:

B. The Spirit enables us in Sanctification (Rom 8:13-14).

It's critical we see these 2 verses together.

8:13 "...through the Spirit you do mortify the deeds of the body..."

8:14 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

(8:27 "the mind of the Spirit")

"For as many as are LED by the Spirit of God..." (see Friesen, 137)

V 14 is often quoted as proof of the idea that the Spirit leads believers through inner impressions or promptings or feelings. But is that what Paul has in mind?

Quote: Garry Frieson (137), "The context deals a death blow to such an understanding of this passage...First, the context is not dealing with daily decision making in nonmoral areas. Second, neither the verse itself nor the near context give any indication that the MEANS of the leading is by inward 'impressions.' Furthermore, there is no hint that the GOAL of the leading is directed toward the individual will of God..."

The word 'led' is a common, nontechnical word.

Remember his instruction in v 13? The Spirit helps us "mortify" (put to death) the deeds of the body. The "leading" of the Spirit in v 14 has to do with the MORAL will of God, not the INDIVIDUAL will of God.

The point is this. There's little grounds for using this verse to teach that the Spirit guides us by impressions or promptings when it comes to day to day decisions we make. Paul's talking about righteous living (13), not daily decision making.

Q: You may be wondering, "Well then, what about "feelings" and "impressions" and "inner peace"? Are these of the Spirit?"

A: Maybe yes, maybe no!

Again the question is this. HOW does the Spirit guide us? Does He guide us through inner impressions and a still small voice?

Or does He guide us by helping us apply the principles and values of Scripture to the alternatives we face?

I would suggest the latter is more consistent with Scripture.

Summary: The point is this. The Spirit enables us to do the will of God. It's worthless to know the will of God if we don't DO the will of God. And if we have the Spirit, we have the ability to DO God's will.

Challenge:

Do you know what our problem is when it comes to the will of God?

Our problem is often not a lack of knowledge, but of obedience.

eg--What Paul said about the Jews in Rom 2:17-18

2:17-18 "But if thou art called a Jew...and knowest His will..."

The Jews had God's Word. They knew God's will. What was their problem?

2:21 "Thou who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

The Jews knew the will of God. But they didn't implement it. They didn't cooperate with the Spirit.

Illust:

Q: If I'm out of the will of God tonight, how do I get back in?

Illust: Treking through the woods with a map..."I know a shortcut!"

You end up getting lost. What's the best thing to do? Go back to where you KNOW you're at, and follow the map.

Q: If you're out of God's will tonight, if you've been resisting the Spirit, what should you do?

A: Go back to where you got off the trail, and get back on.