

#166 “Biblical Decision-Making”

by Brent Barnett

www.relevantbibleteaching.com

There is a lot of teaching on how to find and know the will of God for our lives, but we really need not make it over-complicated. Here are five truths from Scripture to help guide us so that we can make wise choices and honor God with our lives.

1. God leads us according to and never in contradiction to His Word.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” If we want to be sanctified, if we want to be used of God to bless others, if we want to be able to speak truth, if we want to be able to avoid deception, and if we want to be fully equipped and adequate to accomplish God’s purposes on earth, we must be in God’s Word, studying it and meditating upon it. This is a lifelong journey, and it is not always easy, requiring perseverance and much prayer. Fortunately, God has given us His Holy Spirit to help teach us the truth, for through Him, the Word can make sense and pierce to the depths of our souls (Hebrews 4:12). As we are in God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will constantly be working to teach us new things about God and His ways, His principles, and how He wants us to live this life. There are so many decisions that would be greatly simplified if only we knew what God already said in His Word. Those who want to walk in wisdom and make God-honoring decisions need to be people who are regularly in God’s Word and devoted to learning God’s principles for how to live this life.

2. God leads us by the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Romans 8:14 says, “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” Galatians 5:18 echoes this truth, saying, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.” Jesus was also led by the Spirit (Luke 4:1), and the leading of the Spirit is thus a mark of the true follower of God. Having the Spirit’s leading in our hearts is a clear indicator of God’s provision, blessing, and faithfulness in our lives. He does not leave us to be on our own, but He is always there to throw up a red flag if we are veering off course of where we should be. He is there to create an internal prompting in our hearts that we need to do something that we have been praying about and seeking God’s principles about. He will always lead according to God’s principles and never through some additional revelation, for the Bible is complete. No words are added to God’s Word without a curse (Revelation 22:18-19). Thus, the Spirit does not give us new revelation, but He leads us through our spirits by helping us to apply God’s Word, to see as God sees, to desire as God desires, and to think as Christ thinks. He shapes our wills to do and want what God wants. We will know when we are grieving or resisting the Spirit, and it will be clear to us when He is leading us in a certain way. The world is led by false spirits of distortion (Isaiah 19:14), but God’s people are led by the Spirit of the Lord to give us rest and to bring God glory (Isaiah 63:14). We should never underestimate the Spirit’s value in helping us make decisions, and if we choose to ignore His leading, we should

expect trouble.

3. God leads us by giving us wisdom when we ask Him in faith.

God calls upon us to ask Him for wisdom in James 1:5-6, saying, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.” Wisdom will be given to those who truly seek it, who truly want it, and who truly believe that God will give it to them. The mere reality that we have to ask for wisdom implies that we will often lack wisdom. Despite our study of God’s Word and the fact that we have the Spirit in our hearts, we still need to ask for the wisdom of God. This is because we will constantly need to keep growing and learning as God gives us challenges fit for doing just that. We should never think that we have arrived spiritually such that we have all wisdom or that we fully understand the Bible. God has a way of putting us in places where we will need to ask Him for wisdom such that we will explore the depths and wonders of God’s Word further and know the leading of His Spirit better. When we have a tough decision to make and we don’t know what to do, we need only to ask God for wisdom in faith. He will provide it. This promise should provide us with great confidence and hope for the future.

4. God leads us through the desires of our hearts if and only if we are fully delighting in Him.

Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.” The key thing here is that we do not do what we want without seeking the will and wisdom of God, for if we start thinking that our desires are always infallible, then we will likely end up fulfilling the desires of our flesh. However, if we are confident that we are indeed fully seeking the delight of God and His glory, then we ought not to entirely discount the desires and affections of our hearts. We should be patient as we test our desires to make sure that they are right and that they align with God’s principles in His Word and in His timing for our lives. But let us not completely ignore what we long for in our hearts as if God’s purposes are always to spite our desires. That is not the kind of God we serve. He enjoys giving us good and perfect gifts (James 1:17), gifts that even surpass that which we could ask for or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). 1 John 3:21-22 says, “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” Those who are walking faithfully before God, keeping His commandments, can truly delight in God. These should not totally ignore the desires of their hearts, but they do need to remember that God in His wisdom and perfection is “greater than our heart and knows all things” (1 John 3:20). Desires are part of the equation, but they must always be tested and submitted to the Spirit of God and to the Word of God because God doesn’t make mistakes, though we do.

5. God leads us as we persevere in prayer.

When we are faced with a dilemma and tough predicament, we need to follow

Nehemiah's example in Nehemiah 1:4. He says, "When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." It is easy to want to act immediately, and God is not oblivious to the timeframes that we might be under. But, as Nehemiah rightly did, we should spend time before the Lord, casting our requests upon Him as we beg and plead with Him for change, for direction, for insight, and for answers. Nehemiah didn't take a step of action until he had clear direction. God blessed his steps and honored his faith, but he first stopped to seek God, praying and fasting for days. It is easy to be impatient with God, but we will save ourselves a lot of trouble and wasted time and effort if we commit to praying first before acting brashly.

There will be times in life where we will be confused and lack wisdom. This is just the reality of this world and this time. Yet we do not have a God Who is confused or lacking anything, and our God desires to give us wisdom so that we can make God-honoring decisions. For the sake of His name and glory, He wants to help us. Let us be those who turn to God in our time of need, listening to His Word, obeying His commands, being sensitive to the Spirit's ministry in our hearts, evaluating our desires before Him, and persevering in prayer. When we are in darkness, God will give us the light that we need (Psalm 119:105).