**Seeking God’s will for our lives: How can we discern it? (JD09)**

C:\Users\cryun2\Documents\Imagenes 1\Sports Related\Boxer 3.tifAfter I prayed about undertaking another MA program in Asian American Studies, I came to a conclusion that this was God’s will for my life. I thought this training, along with seminary education, would help me to understand the mindset of the people whom I was going to minister in the future. However, it seemed like everyone was discouraging me (saying, “What for?” or “Is your faith OK?”) and on top of that I didn’t get accepted by the program. My first thought was that I must’ve misread God’s will but after praying about this matter, Proverbs 24: 16b came to my mind: “For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again.” I sensed that I hadn’t misread God’s will but that this was an obstacle that I needed to overcome and persevere. After resubmitting a required paper for admission, which I worked hard on, I got accepted. Looking back, this MA degree was pivotal in getting accepted to a Ph.D. program; more importantly, it was during this period that the Lord opened my eyes to see the need for contextualizing His eternal truth in an ever-changing world. To many of us who want to follow Christ, we desire to know God’s will concerning jobs, schools, relationships, etc. What I shared here in discerning God’s will, perhaps many experience guidance in this way (i.e., a certain thought or verse). Let’s explore other ways of seeing God’s will.

***Get up!***

**Q:** Share a similar situation in which you ascertained what you were praying for on your 2nd try.

**A. Revisiting Gideon:** Read 6:11-24, 33-40.

1. Whenever we can identify ourselves with people appearing in the Bible, the level of our interest goes up. I think Gideon is someone whom we can easily identify with since he does what we would normally do when facing similar circumstances.

**Q:** What does Gideon do that reminds us of ourselves in these verses: 6:13, 15, 17, 36 & 39?

2. The focus: Gideon’s way of figuring out God’s will in his life. The narrative presents a reluctant man who wishes that God had chosen someone else for the big task. He doesn’t really want to do this unless he is absolutely sure that it is the LORD’s will.

**Q1:** In 36-38, describe the request he made to the LORD. In essence, what’s he asking God to do?

**Q2:** In 39, describe the 2nd request Gideon made to the LORD. Is it different from the first one?

**Q3:** But each time God obliged by doing what Gideon asked Him to do. What does that imply?

**B. Making sense of this: Is it OK to do what Gideon did when seeking God’s will?**

1. The NT doesn’t really talk about the so-called Gideon’s fleece method in figuring out God’s will, thus we may not have any

specific guidelines in how to properly implement this.

**Q**: Do you detect any peril in using this method to seek the Lord’s will? If so, what are they?

2. How to avoid mishearing God because if you think Gideon’s method is over the top, then consider 2 other ways found in the NT.

**Q1:** Read Acts 16:6-10. What means did God use to change Paul’s mind about going to Bithynia?

**Q2:** Are you ready for the next one? The 11 apostles used the following method in order to choose the 12th apostle to replace Judas who betrayed Jesus. Read Acts 1:23-26. What was it?

3. Can we rely on these methods to know God’s will for us? We shouldn’t completely say NO but we do need a firmer base & some guidelines before expecting God’s direction in these ways.

**Q:** Share an experience of having discovered God’s will through one of these methods.

**C. Reviewing Gideon’s method**

1. So what does putting out the fleece to figure out God’s will look like in real life? Try this one:

**Q1:** In what way was this similar to what Gideon did?

**Q2**: Does this method guarantee the discovery of God’s will?

2. In order for this to work (the Lord willing), it must be accompanied by 2 things: one, prior compliance to God’s general will; two, an attitude of humility, reminding us that just because I’m obeying God’s specific will (i.e., the big picture) for my life doesn’t

mean that He automatically approves every step I take in trying to fulfill it. We still need to abide by God’s general will.

**D. Theology of God’s general and specific will**: God’s will is twofold, general and specific.

1. His general will embraces His plan and purpose for the whole creation, which would include us. There is no mystery about this because it is plainly shown in the Scripture for all to see.

**Q:** For instance, to a married boss who is praying whether it may be God’s will for him to have an adulterous affair with his secretary, what would God say to him?

2. In addition, God has His specific will which differs with each individual Christian. Ephesians 2:10 states, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” This means that God has a tailor-made plan for the life of every believer. The details, of course, are not spelled out in the Scriptures.

**Q1:** In reading 2 Cor. 6:14-15 (*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers*), what can we learn about God’s general will with respect to whom should Christians marry?

**Q2**: Other than that, what does (or, doesn’t) this verse say about whom the believer should marry?

3. Read Rom. 12:1-2.**Q:** It suggests that to ascertain the specific will of God, the mind of the believer must be renewed day by day by an act of continual consecration. So what does the renewing of the mind have to do with successfully discerning God’s will?

4. It is not easy to ascertain God’s specific will, for it takes time & discipline. It is also impossible to know this will unless we’re willing to bring our lives in conformity with His general will.

**Q:**  Why does non-conformity to God’s general will affect our ability to discern God’s specific will for our lives?

5. Suggestion: Before asking God to help us to discern his will (i.e., before making a decision) through any of the 4 ways presented in the study (i.e., inward impressions while praying, putting out a fleece, through dreams, casting lots), we ought to consider:

Am I in His word?; am I currently complying with God’s general will?

6. Share about any decision that you need to make now. What can you do to ensure that you hear correctly from God on this matter?