

Food for Thought

For the week of November 24, 2013

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. Most of us have been in the position of praying for God's will and then feeling like we're not getting a clear answer. Our reactions can range from frustration, to feeling puzzled, to complacency and not taking any action. How do the following verses differ from, support or change your idea of what it means to wait on God's will?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. [NIV]

Philippians 2:12-13

Do Everything Without Grumbling

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. [NIV]

1 Peter 2:15

15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. [NIV]

Which of these verses presents the biggest challenge to you in seeking God's will?

2. Chris mentioned that in order to seek God's will, we need to "choose to think differently." As you read through the following Scriptures, jot down the choice involved in each and how it could help you when seeking God's will.

Mark 1:35

Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. [NIV]

Psalms 119:9-16

9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

10 I seek you with all my heart;
do not let me stray from your commands.

11 I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.

12 Praise be to you, Lord;
teach me your decrees.

13 With my lips I recount
all the laws that come from your mouth.

14 I rejoice in following your statutes
as one rejoices in great riches.

15 I meditate on your precepts
and consider your ways.

16 I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word. [NIV]

James 4:3-8

3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [NIV]

What choices would you like to make to seek out God's will on a more regular basis?

3. One of the incredible things about God's will is that no matter how far we've gone off track, God is ready and willing to bring us back. How do the following verses help reinforce God's desire to restore us, work in us, and use us for his will no matter how far we've fallen off track?

Jeremiah 18:1-6

At the Potter's House

1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 “Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message.” 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. 4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

5 Then the word of the Lord came to me. 6 He said, “Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! [NIV]

Ezekiel 36:24-30

24 “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.

Chris mentioned we often see God's will in the rearview mirror. Looking back, how have you seen God's will played out in your own life?