

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Toward Sound Decision-Making, Pt 1

Selected Passages

Keywords: Decision-Making, God's Will, Prayer, Word of God, Wisdom, Counsel

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: Having examined several common methods in decision-making for Christians Pastor Henry now seeks to establish a basic paradigm for decisions. This process is established in the Word and moves out from there, resting on the sufficiency of Scripture coupled with the freedom given to us in Jesus Christ.

I. Introduction.

- A. Today I want to give you a basic outline on how to make a decision as a Christian.
- B. There are many reasons why the Christian wants to please God and do His will.
(From DeYoung's *Just Do Something*)
 1. We want to please God.
 2. We can be timid.
 - a. Some can be too fainthearted and get trapped in the world of "what-if" that never gives us rest.
 3. We can want complete fulfillment in this Age.
 - a. We forget we are pilgrims. If we grasp that then when things don't work out we don't fret and become angry or bitter.
 - b. DeYoung references a conversation with his grandfather. The question was if he ever thought about God's will for his life. The answer was, "I don't think so. God's will was never a question presented to me or I ever thought about. I always thought my salvation . . . depended on my accepting by faith the things we believe. After that I don't think I ever had a problem thinking: 'Is this the right thing for me?'"
 - c. The point is simple, outside of understanding God's moral [revealed] will you don't waste a lot of time trying to make sure your dreams come true and such.
 4. We have to many choices.
 - a. Not that long ago in our country and still true in much of the world you did what your father or mother did before you.

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- b. Before the automobile you pretty much married someone in your town and in your church.
 - c. The more you welcome more and more choices and options into your world the greater you will struggle to do something and actually finish it.
 - d. Too often this leads to many a paralyzing effect because they are worried if they choose one thing then they can't do another and what if that is more fulfilling.
 - e. I think of how so many young people struggle in establishing a career because they have endless perceived choices. Instead of grasping that they have need a job to put food on the table and provide for their needs. Beyond those things, everything else is gravy.
5. We are cowards.
- a. There will be many, many, many decisions where you just have to make your best guess. And that is where cowardliness comes in. We seek to discern God's will because we want everything to turn out pretty and happy for us.
 - b. DeYoung points out that God has sovereignly decreed His will and nothing will frustrate it. Therefore the wise Christian can radically commit themselves to that reality and go about our lives.
 - c. As he says it, "God doesn't take risks, so we can." (41)
- C. Prerequisites for making Biblical decisions.
- 1. Be rightly related to Christ.
 - a. Ephesians 4:17-32.
 - (1) Note the connection of living in light of the Gospel.
 - (2) Note how there is to be a practical establishment of the truth of the gospel in how then we live.
 - (3) In many ways vss 25 and on are merely the results of decisions.
 - b. 1 Peter 2:4-25.
 - (1) Show how we come to Jesus though He was rejected (4).
 - (2) Our "living" because of our connection to Him (5).

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- (3) Note the infinitive of purpose in 5b.
 - (4) 6-10 show the reason why we are saved toward this purpose.
 - (5) vs 11-25 then is application to our right relationship with Jesus.
 - (a) Note the mind set that is established throughout this section. Humility, submission, honor, excellence, good works, etc.
 - (b) Note the painful calling of vs 21 as well as his rationale behind it.
 - (c) Also the purpose of Jesus' sin-bearing in vs 24.
2. Recognize God's sovereignty over all things.
- a. Romans 8:28-30.
 - (1) God's oversees all things and most certainly all things over our lives. But remember that "good" doesn't mean "pleasant."
 - (2) Note the purpose of our predestination in vs 29.
 - (3) The surety of our end in vs 30.
 - (4) Now how that all affects us this side of eternity through to vs 39.
 - b. Eph 1:11.
 - (1) Trust that God is guiding you ever step of the way through His all-encompassing providence.
 - (2) This alone is sufficient, if grasped, to make you stop that second-guessing that can utterly paralyze you.
 - c. James 4:13-16.
 - (1) Note that there is no pursuit of what God wills.
 - (2) Rather there is simply a decision to do something and go somewhere and resting in the sovereignty of God.
 - (3) Nowhere is there the idea of then second-guessing your decision or using new methods to divine that will beforehand.

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II. Basics of Decision-Making.

A. Scripture.

1. This means the imperatives of the bible. And at the core of this is what you believe, really believe regarding the bible.
 - a. Psalm 19.
 - b. Psalm 119.
 - (1) Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.
 - (2) Psalm 119:105 Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.
 - (3) Psalm 119:140 Thy word is very pure, Therefore Thy servant loves it.
 - (4) Psalm 119:160 The sum of Thy word is truth, And every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting.
 - c. It goes back to the essence of the message in Deuteronomy 29:29.
2. The very first step in making a decision is to ask if you are in obedience to what God has revealed as commands in the bible.
 - a. First, remember you are not Israel and your are not under the Mosaic Law.
 - b. Second, therefore, focus on the New Testament and its commands.
 - c. Don't think you will make good decisions while you are actively rebelling or resisting what God has already shown you.
3. Be busy in practicing what God has clearly revealed to you as to His will.
 - a. MacArthur's *Found! God's Will* simple argument that if we will invest a life pursuing what God has clearly revealed then our desires will naturally bend toward a life pleasing to Him.
 - b. Matthew 6:25ff.
 - (1) What the Lord desires of us is not to wonder if this house or that house is His will.

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- (2) He desires that we order our decisions under the idea of His Kingdom (which is not yet) and to express His righteousness, or faithfulness, in this world.
- c. 1 Thessalonians 4:3.
- d. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.
- e. Colossians 1:9.
- (1) Filled here speaks of being to a fullness. It is a maturing in our knowledge of God's will. You can think of saturation as well if that is helpful.
- (2) Notice the realm in which this occurs, wisdom and understanding.
- (3) vs 10 then gives the goal, "worthy of the Lord," which is defined in three ways.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Nothing here is new to most of you.
- B. It begins with a right relationship to Jesus.
- C. It moves to the commands of the Scripture.
- D. And from there it begins to guide us into the great freedom we have as those redeemed by the Lord.
- E. Next week we will look at those aspects.

Small Group Questions

- Discuss how this sermon affected those who heard it.
- Why does everything need to start with a right relationship to Jesus. This is quite broad so don't settle for the obvious. This involves salvation and growing in godliness in light of the gospel.
- What are challenges to knowing what is actually commanded of you by God and how do you resolve those challenges?