

## God's Will in my LIFE *Pastor David Chittenden*

### Proverbs 3

Some body sent this to me... I guess they probably knew that I needed some help. They sent me this thing that tells you "When you know you need a new car":

One reason is when you pull over to let a fire truck go by it stops behind you.

Another reason is you have to go to the repair center every thousand miles to get the duck tape replaced. I like this one, you accidentally drive into a junk yard, drive out and they accuse you of stealing.

The Blue Book lists your car under health risk.

The only thing holding your bumper together is your Dukakis 88 sticker.

And I like this one; it says that the valet puts on a crash helmet and full body armor before parking your car. So I guess you kind of have an idea of when it is you need to get a new car.

You know theirs a lot of things, a lot of decisions that we have to make in our lives that I believe we have to take the word of God and we have to apply it to our particular situation.

When I think about doing the will of God and determining the will of God from the scripture, I really believe what God is trying to do in our life is He try's to get us to go from a self-centered life to a God centered life. What God wants us to do is to realize that it is important that we do not miss God's best in our lives. So we have to take the word of God and we have to apply it to our life. With that in mind, I would like for you to look in the book of Proverbs chapter number three. And I want to look at a couple of familiar scriptures, and then theirs a number of scriptures I would like to look at this evening that I believe will help us in our study.

One of the things I believe is important as far as the job God has called me to do here is that; we need to constantly, constantly be reminded of the things that are the most basic and yet the most important things in our Christian life. You know many times I'm afraid we get ahead of God and we begin looking at other things and thinking well, I already know a little bit about that and we kind of move on. When like Paul said; you know theirs times when we just have to stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance. I find that there are a lot of things that, it's not that we don't know

them, it's that we just forget them. And it's important that we continue to go back and look and see what the scripture say's and how to apply the scripture to our particular situation.

Proverbs three beginning in verse number five, the scripture say's this; (very familiar verses) he say's; "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding and in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths".

Let's bow for prayer... Heavenly Father as we look at your word, I pray that you would help us to be able to discern what it is that the Holy Spirit would like for us to focus on in our lives this evening. Lord, if there's one person here that doesn't know Jesus Christ as there personal savior, I pray that today would be the day, that they would accept him as there personal savior and realize that there life will never be the same and there eternity can be changed if they just trust in him. Lord I pray you'd help those that are Christians here as we look once again at your word and especially these familiar verses. I pray you would speak to our hearts. Lord, help us to realize how important it is that we trust you and that we acknowledge what you have done and what you are doing in our lives. In Jesus' name I pray- Amen.

### **TRUST IN THE LORD**

What I want to talk to you about for the next few minutes has to do with God's will for our lives. You know, you talk to people sometimes and as you talk to them about doing the will of God, I've had people come to me and they begin telling me how that they prayed about this or prayed about that. And I'm afraid sometimes people can come around and they can learn the right terminology, but many times they don't know how to apply the scripture to their situation. You know it's not a matter of saying here's what I'm going to do God and then go to God and say okay God I want you to rubber stamp my plans. I've already decided this, and I'm going to do this but now I'm going to find a scripture to back it up. You see if were going to determine the will of God, I believe we need to know how to follow God's will regardless of what are feelings are or what our circumstances are. But we need to look and see what it is that God wants. I guess of all the verses in the scriptures that I probably heard more growing up, I probably heard these two verses more than any verse because, I believe my parents were trying to teach me even as a young child that if I'm going to know the will of God I've got to trust God and follow God in every thing in my life.

## **Begins with SALVATION**

You know that's what he says here, and of course it's so familiar when he says trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding. I think about the first part of that when he talks about trust in the Lord, and the importance of trusting in the Lord. You know it's easy to say we trust God, but when it really comes down to putting our faith in Him, where we really trust Him; for many people that's a whole different matter. You see God knows exactly what's going on in our life. And there's things about the will of God, and especially in discerning the will of God that, that I believe we got to realize that trusting in the Lord is the very foundation of knowing the will of God. You see if we were going to trust in the Lord, then I believe we understand that begins with salvation. A person must be a Christian to be able to trust in the Lord. You can't trust in God without putting your faith in Jesus Christ. And so, if you're going to discern the will of God there needs to be a time when you have acknowledged that you were a sinner and you came to God and said; God I need your forgiveness and I want to trust Jesus Christ as my personal savior. Some times people hear that and they say; well preacher why are you going back over this? Because, I found out that as I was saying Sunday night, I found out that there are a lot of people that use the term saved but they are not meaning what the Bible means about being saved. And so it's important that we understand that, the scripture tell us that if we were going to be saved we've got to trust in Jesus Christ as our own personal savior. A church can't take you to heaven. Good works can't take you to heaven. It's only by faith and trust in Jesus Christ. And there are a lot of churches out there that teach that you have to do good works in order to get to heaven. I want you to know that there is not enough good works that you can do to get to heaven. It's only through Jesus Christ. And so trust begins with salvation.

Of course Romans 8:14 says; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And we understand that when a person gets saved the Holy Spirit comes inside to dwell. And I know that sometimes we don't talk about the Holy Spirit maybe as much as we ought to but, it's important that we realize that when we get saved the Holy Spirit lives inside of us. He comes inside to dwell and there is a number of things that He does, but one thing He does in particular, He comes to teach us the things about God's will in our life. And so, as we are led by the Spirit of God, we can only be led by God's Spirit if we are a child of God.

Now, before I move on from this point, I've been around the church long enough to know that there are some people that have just made a profession, but have never truly accepted Christ as their personal Savior. People can sit in...you know I had a fellow tell me a number of years ago, I remember I said; 'well now what do you believe? He said; 'I believe the same thing you believe. Well what is that? Well, you

know I'm sure you believe what the church believes. Well, what does the church believe? Well, the church just believes what the Bible says. Well, you know that all sounds good but all that is, is double talk. When it comes down to a person trusting Christ as their own personal savior, that there's been a time, and you know I believe it's important that we think about how that there has been a time when we have put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. It begins with salvation. And you know, it makes me sad to think that people could come in God's house and they can sit in God's house, and they can hear the message preached and they can miss out on the most important thing and that; is knowing Jesus Christ as their personal savior. You know we can miss a lot of things in this world, but if we miss heaven we've missed everything. And so it begins with salvation. And if you're here and you've never trusted Jesus Christ, if there has not been a time in your life when you recognized you were a sinner and realized that Jesus died on the cross for you, and you accepted him into your heart and ask him to forgive you of your sins, then I want to encourage you to do that; and to realize the importance of that. You can not know the will of God if you don't know who God is, if you haven't placed your faith and trust in Him.

And so knowing the will of God begins with salvation. And that's such a basic thing but, I'm afraid there are some that just miss out on it because they try to get over that. They say; okay let me find out the rules and the regulations and they begin to try to find a way of just fitting in and knowing what to say, but what's most important is that you have a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. It begins with salvation.

## **Comes Through WISDOM**

And then, I believe we understand that in knowing the will of God and trusting in the Lord that, that comes through wisdom. You see in Ephesians chapter five the scripture says this; Paul said: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." You see in order for us to know the will of God in our life, we have to be able to apply the knowledge that God has given us and we need to be able to apply that through understanding what God's will is for our life. He said be not unwise. Another words, you can as a Christian live an unwise life. You can as a Christian live out of the perfect will of God for your life because you are unwise, because you are not understanding what the will of the Lord is. It is very important that you understand the will of the Lord. I'm going to say it again. It is very important that you understand what the will of God is!

You know I think about the spiritual direction of our church, and you know as I've been praying, as I've told you the other day some things that I'm... (Sunday night

especially) that I'm concerned about us doing and looking for; you know the hardest thing to do is to get people to see something that is unseen. But if we're going to walk by faith, we've got to see the unseen. We've got to look ahead and realize that God can do greater things through us if we walk by faith, and we realize that God can use us, and God can do great things if we learn to step out on faith and take some risks. When I talk about understanding what the will of the Lord is, I believe my responsibility as a pastor is to lead the church in a direction that will go on and do a greater work for Jesus Christ. You know, I just don't get content with just keeping on doing the same old thing and not ever trying to do some more. I hope you don't. You know I believe that what God wants for us is; God wants us to do more as He gives us opportunity. As we grow in the Lord. You see he said; be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

You know, I remember a preacher was talking one day about how that he felt like the Lord wanted him to leave and to go to another place. He went and told the board there, he said I feel like the Lord would have me to leave. He showed me another direction and this is what God wants. And, he had a woman walk up to him the night that he resigned, and she walked up to him and she said this; she said, 'I prayed about it, and I don't believe that it's God's will for you to leave.' And so he turned to her and he said this; he said, 'Ma'am you just confirmed the fact that I know this is God's will for my life.' She said; 'how did I do that?' He said; 'Well, either I know the will of God or I don't know the will of God. And if you're telling me that I don't know the will of God, I need to leave.'

You see if we are going to apply the scriptures, I believe we need to listen to what the Holy Spirit has to say. And we need to be wise and understanding what the will of the Lord is. And you know I'm not afraid to say that if God has shown me to do something then I'm willing for us to go that direction. I still believe that God has the power to turn and help us to go the right direction if we acknowledge Him in all of our ways. He said trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths. And so, I believe it's important that we are looking for God's direction and we need to do that through wisdom.

You know I've had people come to me some times and say; 'Well, preacher I don't think you know what you're doing.' Well... You know, there are a lot of things I don't know. And you know I was telling you Sunday night about some things that the Lord has shown me that, He's showing me to go a different direction. But you know what I'm convinced about the will of God? I am convinced that if we are open to God's will that God will make it plain to us. But we have to be open to what God's will is. And I believe that if we're going to be able to accomplish what God wants us to accomplish, we need to be able to have understanding of what the will of God is.

And by the way, just let me say; I believe that it's important that you understand this; you know I can have the position of the pastor, but I can't pastor anyone who doesn't let me pastor them. You know it's kind of like-(and I use Brother Synott a lot of times)... You know I think about teaching and how that you can have the position of a teacher, but if somebody doesn't want to learn, you can't make them learn anything. They have to decide whether or not they're going to listen, whether or not that they're going to be a learner. You see if we are going to accomplish what we need to accomplish we need to see God's leadership and God's direction. Now, I'm not setting myself up as the final authority. As a matter of fact, as we go through this I hope that you see what the scripture says about discerning the will of God, but I do believe that the church is a very important part of determining the will of God in your life. And that's why I encourage people to get involved in their Sunday school classes, and listen to what their Sunday school teachers have to say; and to come to the preaching services. You know, I always get concerned when somebody's not in the preaching service because; I realize that the Bible says that God uses the foolishness of preaching. And it is an important part of growing and knowing the will of God in our life. And by the way, you know the Devil can get in pretty quickly. And so it's important that we stay faithful in God's house and faithful in hearing the message of God. Now, that was free. That was extra. That wasn't in my notes.

## Requires WILLINGNESS

But you know, we trust in the Lord and that helps us to know the will of God. It begins with salvation. It comes through wisdom. And I believe this is very important as well. It requires willingness. We have to determine if we really want to do the will of God. In John 7:17, Jesus said; "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Jesus said that. In Ephesians chapter 6, Paul was talking here, he told the servants, he said; 'servants be obedient unto your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye service as men pleasers; but as the service of Christ.' Notice this, doing the will of God from the heart. Now what is he talking about there? Well, I believe what he's talking about is; is we have to determine whether or not when God reveals things to us, if we give God the green light or not. You see, being willing I believe, is saying God I'm going to give you a green light in my life. You just come on in and you show me what you want me to do. Now I think there are a lot of people that they have a red light up. They don't want the will of God in their life because, they're afraid of either what the will of God is going to put in their life, or what the will of God is going to take out of their life. And so they have a red light up. They say; 'I'm saved, but God don't tell me anything else.'

Now, I hope that no one here has a red light. But I want to tell you some of the most miserable people I know are Christians who put up a red light to the will of God. They say; 'God, this is not what I signed up for.' Now that's just the way it is. Now, there's a lot of people that put a yellow light up. 'God, you show me what it is and then let me, let me think about it awhile. It's... I'm only going to do it with caution because God, I'm really not sure that this is the best thing for me.' But then there are those that have the green light. Those who say; 'God, whatever you want; I'll do it.'

## **Willing to PRAY & WAIT:**

Now, it requires willingness, willingness in a couple of different areas. I believe; I believe we are willing to pray and to wait. And in Matthew chapter 7, in verse 7 and 8, we know the scripture tells us; ask and it shall be given unto you. Seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. It's important that we are willing to pray and to wait on God. I think about what the scripture says in First John chapter 5 when he says; "And this is the confidence we have in him that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." So when we pray, are we willing to wait on God? Are we willing to let God do what only God can do in our life? You see that's a part of the willingness to do the will of God. That's part of trusting in the Lord. What are you going to do if God doesn't answer it today? 'Well, God just doesn't care about me.' Well that's not true. Well what if God doesn't answer it this week? 'Well I just don't know. I prayed and God didn't do anything.' Well wait a minute. This is the confidence according to First John chapter 5; this is the confidence that we have in him; if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us! So then you go a month. You may go two months. What if you go six months? You say; 'Well, well now wait a minute brother Dave. There needs to be a time limit on this.' Who you giving a time limit on? We either trust God or we don't trust God. God knows how to answer those things. God knows exactly what we need. I see that yellow light coming up. 'Now God, it's been several months.' What about when it's a year? A year?! Well, when I was you guy's age a year seemed like eternity. I mean think about a year ago. You know it's kind of like thinking about last year's girlfriend. You know the definition of last year's girlfriend is, a stale mate. Those of you that play chess know that. But you know, I think about the importance of doing the will of God, and having confidence that God knows what's best. What if it takes two years? What if it takes five years? What if it takes ten years? You say; 'how, how in the world could you wait that long?' Well, well now stop and think about those in the scriptures. Think about Abraham and how that God told him that, he was going to bless him and give him a son. But look how many years it was before God answered that prayer. Think about when David was told that he was going to be king, over all of Israel, and yet David wound up having to run from the king and was an enemy of the state. Think about Moses, and how that God appointed him from a young man to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. And yet; forty years he was on the back side of the desert. Does that change the will of God? Well I'm afraid many times for us it does; because we don't trust God. We don't, we don't believe that God can take care of us. And, and that yellow light goes up. And then pretty soon the red light goes up. 'Well God certainly doesn't know. How can I do God's will?' And you know you see people they, they begin, they begin to exhibit

those signs. And I can't help but be concerned because you see people begin to get to a place where there really not trusting God like they ought to. And what's happening is they start missing out on the will of God. You see there has to be a willingness to do God's will. Willing to pray and wait... Not only to pray and wait but willing to go through difficulties.

## **Willing to go through DIFFICULTIES:**

I think about what the Apostle Paul said in Acts chapter 20, verse number 22, when he said: "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." And so what was Paul's response to that, when he, when he knew that this was the will of God? Not knowing what was ahead, but knowing in his heart that, that he was in the center of God's will; he said; "but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." You see we need to be willing, now, now I believe it's important to understand that, that's where the green light comes in. Willing to go through difficulties that means, we need to be willing to get away from some of the creature comforts. That God may call us to do hard things. Can you imagine our soldiers going to war and saying; 'I'm not going unless I'm taking my pillow'? And you kind of, you know, you can kind of smile about that. But there are Christians all the time that say; 'Well, I'll do God's will if...'. There's no if about it. We're either willing to do the will of God, or we're not willing to do God's will. You see it's a green light. What if God calls us to difficulties? What if the will of God, to work through us, means that we've got to go through terrible trials? Now we don't like to think about that. What if, if God is going to use you greatly when he puts you in the hospital? What if, God's going to use you greatly when you're standing out there, at the cemetery, with the loss of a loved one, and having to say goodbye and shed the tears and feel all the anguish and pain, are you willing to follow the will of God (?)...through difficulties. What if you get married and within a year your spouse develops all kinds of, or some kind of a debilitating disease were their not able to take care of themselves? What do you do then? Do you say; 'well, am I willing to do the will of God or not?' Paul goes on to say in another passage that we do everything with out murmuring and complaining. If God sends us to that hot desert place, are we willing to do it with joy? You see, doing the will of God we've got to be willing to go through the difficulties. This is the part of trusting in the Lord. To realize that God knows what's going on. Giving up some creature comforts. Now, that's all foundational things.

Before I can really get into discerning the will of God in your life, I believe we have to take care of the foundational things. You need to know that you're a child of God first of all. You need to make sure that's settled. You know based on the Word of God, and you know I have people come to me, and from time to time they'll say; 'well you know I'm just not sure about my salvation'. Well, you know what's important to realize? Is that, your not the first one that's doubted your salvation. You're not the first one that's had doubts. You can look at; you look at who the scripture call's the greatest man, other than Jesus Christ. You know who that is? That was John the Baptist. Jesus said that about John the Baptist. The greatest man that's ever lived, other than Jesus Christ was John the Baptist according to what Jesus said. What happened when John the Baptist saw Jesus? He said; "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"! And here's... you know have you ever seen anything about; if John the Baptist was here today? I wonder how many pulpit committees would let him preach in their Church. I mean here's a guy that put on this old camel hair for a garment. And from what I understand, camels don't smell too sweet. And his diet... he ate locust and wild honey. We're going to have a fellowship tonight, who's bringing the locust? I'll bring the wild honey. Oh John the Baptist went out of there, and as the scripture say's; "he was a voice crying in the wilderness." He was preaching repentances. He was telling people, listen your going the wrong way. That's what repentance is by the way. It's turning around and going the other way. They had taken the commandments of God and just added all kind of things to them, and completely missed the point. And John the Baptist came along and said your going the wrong way, but there's some one who's coming who's shoe I'm not worthy, the latchet of his shoe, I'm not worthy to un loose. And then he said; "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." And, remember how he said in the book of John, he said; "He must increase, but I must decrease." But you know John the Baptist got in trouble because, he told the truth. He faced people about there sin. And you know you find out, in trying to accomplish the will of God, you can talk about positive things and people will stay with you. But you start telling people that their doing sinful things... whoa; 'don't you tell me, don't you start preaching to me'. What did John the Baptist do? Well he told, he told Herod he should not have that woman. Who was it? Some body knows. Herodias, yeah. You shouldn't take her for a wife. Well, that up set him. Do you remember what happened? Because, that got John the Baptist put in jail. You know I think about John the Baptist in jail and we read of probably one of the lowest points in his life. Here, here he was just trying to do what was right. And he wound up in jail for just telling the truth. And when he got in jail, he sent his disciples to Jesus and said; "are you the one we're looking for? Or is there someone else?" And I've read that and thought; you know, if John the Baptist can have some doubts, I believe we can

have some doubts. Do you know what Jesus told the disciples? He said; 'just go show him again the things which you have seen and heard.'

You know when somebody comes and say's I've got doubts, you know what I do? I like to take the scripture and turn to Romans chapter 10 in verse 9, and 10 and 13 and I say; 'let's just read that again.' "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead..." 'What do those next four words say?' "Thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And then he say's down in verse number 13; "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now, the question comes in, have you done that? And many times I've had people say; 'yeah I've done that'. So well then if you've done your part, then let God do his part. And when the devil hops up on your shoulder and says; 'now listen you can't possibly be saved, that's just too easy.' Then you just tell the devil to just go on and get off your shoulder and leave you alone because, you're going to depend on what, thus say's the word of God.

You see, I believe when we stand in heaven, when we stand before God, we don't stand before God with a church roll. We don't stand before God with a list of good works. We stand before God and say; 'God here's your word and this is what I've trusted you on.' You see we have to trust what God has said. And so, I believe it's important that when we go through difficulties, sometimes we may have to go through a low time and realize that God can show us once again; and we can know for sure that we've trusted Christ as our savior. Now if we can doubt our salvation, I think sometimes we can doubt our purpose. Sometimes we get saved and we wonder; well, why am I here? You know, I've talked to a lot of people who've have said; 'well you know, I just struggle with why am I here?' You know the truth of the matter is; we may not know till we get to heaven, what purpose God had for us here. But look at the Old Testament Saints, and how many of them went through so many difficulties that they did not even understand, or know all about what was going on around them. But we read those things all the time and we our encouraged by those. Who knows that in our life, that God has put us through those difficulties because of something he's gone a do in somebody else' life. You know sometimes I talk to people (especially they get in their later years) and they say; 'well I just don't understand why I am still here and what's going on'. Well, well we many not ever understand why we're here. But let's leave that in God's hands and say; 'God you knew the easy times, and you know the difficult times'. And by the way, God knows all about old age. He's known about it from the beginning. You know he knew about us, the Bible say's, in the Psalms; he said that he knew about us when we were formed in our mother's womb. He knew about us before we could take care of ourselves. He knew about us when we thought we could take care of ourselves. And

he still knows about us when somebody else has to take care of us. God hasn't changed! He knows where we are in our life. So we've got to be willing to go through the difficulties, to understand the will of God. Now this, this is foundational. Getting wisdom, applying what we know and understanding the will of God, and then having the willingness, that's foundational.

Now let me move on. And I've preached so much on this part, that I'm going to have to hurry through the next part, but I hate to hurry. I almost divided this up into two messages, but I'm going to give you what I can.

## ***ACKNOWLEDGE HIM***

### **Through His WRITTEN WORD**

You see, not only does he say in Proverbs 3:5 and 6 to; "trust in the Lord". But then he goes on to say; "in all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths". And so if we're going to acknowledge him, how are we going to do that? How do we practically know the will of God? We know, once we know we're saved, once we are concerned about understanding what the will of the Lord is, once that we our willing to do whatever it is that God wants us to do, how do we practically know the will of God? Well I believe we acknowledge him first of all, (and most basic) through his written word. Psalms 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." And so we acknowledge him through his written word.

You see God gives us in the scripture, he gives us precepts, and he gives us principles. The precepts that he gives us in the scripture are things that there is no question about. As a matter of fact, there's a number of places in the word of God that say's; "this is the will of God." We don't have to say; 'I wonder what God's will is in that?' When the scripture say's; "this is the will of God"... When you come to a sign and that sign say's: stop! You don't drive up there and say what does that mean? I remember as a teenager (I probably shouldn't tell this), somebody told me it means: Spin Tires on Pavement. That's not what it means. And I can tell you this; there are some police officers that will tell you the same thing. You know I remember... You know, awe.... I'm not going to tell you that story. But you know... when we understand precepts, there are some things that are plain like the signs on the road. The sign say's: Speed Limit... fifty-five miles an hour. What does that mean? We don't drive by there and, and of course I've told you about the story, about the lady that the police officer stopped. She was doing, she was on I-35, and she was doing thirty five miles and hour. And the lady in the back seat, when the police officer stopped them and said; "you know you're on the freeway you can't go thirty-five, you need to go faster than that". She said; "you mean that's not the speed

limit sign?" And he said; "No! That's not the speed limit sign." He looked in the back seat, and this lady in the back seat, hair was just sticking out, and I mean this woman was just...she looked like she was fixing to have a nervous break down. And the officer said; "well, what's wrong with her?" And she said; "Well, I guess I just got off of highway 120".

You see there are some signs that are plain signs. The precepts are plain signs.

The scripture say's it's the will of God for children to obey their parents. You know it's not an option for children to obey their parents when they live under their roof. It's not an option! The scripture say's, that's the will of God. The scripture say's it's the will of God that you marry a Christian. The scripture say's it's the will of God, that when you work, you work at your occupation. The scripture tells us that, it's the will of God that, when you have a family, you support your family. The scripture say's it's the will of God to give to the Lord's work; to rear your children by God's standards, to meditate on the scriptures, to pray, to have a joyful attitude, to assemble for worship, to proclaim Christ, to set proper values, to have a spirit of gratitude, to display love, to accept people with out prejudice, it say's all these things, are the will of God. So when we talk about precepts, we're talking about things that the scripture plainly say's; this is the will of God. You know many times people aren't doing the will of God because their not reading the scriptures. But those precepts are there. Now, the precepts are there like the stop sign and like the speed limit sign. But you know I found some other signs on the road too. You ever seen the sign that say's drive carefully? Now what does that mean? Well that means that; you understand the rules of the road, and so if it's a clear day and the speed limits forty-five, you can go forty-five. But if it's an icy day, you use your head. You may need to drive ten miles an hour. You know... what happens many times with Christians is they, they feel like that; 'well if God wants me to do all these things, he just needs to write everything out clearly.' There are some principles that God puts in there that he wants us to use common sense about. He said you take the precepts and then you look at the principles and when the scripture tells you to drive carefully, then you apply the rules of the road. You look around you that means; in how you deal with others. You know there's been times, I've driven down the road, and I've seen people that just don't belong behind the wheel. They've got a loose nut there. You know some times driving down the road, theirs some people you just avoid. We were driving some where, a couple years ago and there was this old truck in front of us, awe' boy he'd be in his lane and then he'd be in the middle, and then he'd be over in the other lane, and then he'd be in the middle. And then he'd be back in his lane, and then in the middle. Pretty soon, you know I just wanted to get around him, because he looked like he was a danger to himself and everybody around him. Now, by the way in the Christian life, and especially young people, you need to understand, theirs

some people around you that are a danger to themselves and everybody around them. You know when I read of young people, that I have known, and they go out here and they get involved in drinking, and they feel like it's not going to affect them, that they can deal with it. That they can handle it because, you know all the beer companies put out all the advertisements that say; oh, drink responsibly. You tell that to the parents of the young man that died just a couple weeks ago, some of you knew. You can't play with those things and there not be consequences. You see when the word of God tells us how we're supposed to live, we not only look at the precepts, but we also look at the principles. We look at the principles and say; you know there are certain things that we need to avoid, and we need to be careful about. And so, we get into the written word, and we understand that these are things that are going to help us. Now, you can't learn everything you need to learn just in one sitting, or just one time through the scriptures. I'm convinced it takes a life time to learn all the things that God wants you to know. There never comes a time in your life when God is not showing you things; that he wants to prepare you for, and use you for, and put into your life or take out of your life, and that is found in the word of God. And so if you're going to determine the will of God, then you need to find out what God's word says. And by the way, don't just learn the word of God so that you can write down a bunch of scriptures after you've determine what you're going to do, and then you just try to back them up. That's not determining God's will, that's determining your will, and then trying to tell God how he ought to do it. And boy, that's not very popular. But I believe we need to be careful about how we approach the will of God. And so to practically apply it, to acknowledge him, we first of all look at the written word, and then there is the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit.

## The Inner Prompting of the HOLY SPIRIT

As the Holy Spirit begins to prompt us, it says in Philippians chapter two, verse thirteen; "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We need to listen to the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit. Now I believe as a child of God, you need to realize that the Holy Spirit lives in side of you, and the Holy Spirit will prompt you in the direction that he wants you to go. As you study the word of God, as you grow in the Lord, as God is working in your life, the Holy Spirit is going to prompt you, and he's going to help you. He's there to help. Now, in acknowledging him we need to acknowledge we have the Holy Spirit. So what you need to do is, you need to read carefully in the scripture how you're supposed to deal with the Holy Spirit. Do you realize the scripture tells us that we can grieve the Holy Spirit? How do we grieve him? Well I believe we can grieve him when he prompts us, and prompts us, and we know he's told us; 'don't do that! This is harmful. You need to change this!' And we say; 'awe, that's alright. I can handle this.' We grieve the Holy Spirit. The scripture says we quench the Holy Spirit. So, sometimes when he's trying to keep us out of harms way, and try to lead us in the right way, we quench him, we keep from listening to what he has to say. And so, we quench the Holy Spirit. Now I believe we can do that in a number of ways, and I'm not going to get into that tonight; but we need to listen to the inter promptings of the Holy Spirit. You know I was talking Sunday night about the importance of our deacons, and how that, that God has used our deacons in the past, and how God has brought us together in determining the will of God. I really believe it's important, that we determine the will of God, and we recognize that it's not a matter of who's right, it's a matter of what's right. You see the inter promptings of the Holy Spirit gives unity. And I believe that, the one thing that has helped us to reach over six hundred souls, in the ten years we've been here, is been because there has been a unity in following what the Holy Spirit has to say. You see if we're going to follow the will of God...and by the way; I say that simply because the job of the church is to win souls to Christ, and that's what our church is doing. And so we can look and say; 'okay God, are we following the promptings of the Holy Spirit? And are we accomplishing what you want?' And I believe that when we accomplish what God wants, then we can say that we are following the promptings of the Holy Spirit. You see because this is God's work. And in our individual life's, God is working individually, and we need to listen to what the Holy Spirit has to say.

The promptings of the Holy Spirit... let me move on quickly...I hate to go quickly on this, but I'll go as quickly as I can.

## Listen to Spiritual, Wise & Trustworthy Counsel

We need to listen to spiritual, wise and trustworthy counsel. Now let me say this, before I move on; choose your counselors carefully. Be careful who you listen too. We are all influenced by someone. I'm always amazed how somebody will be thinking about getting a divorce, and they go talk to somebody who has had five divorces. Choose your counselors carefully. Listen to wise counsel. Listen to spiritual counsel. People that are trustworthy, look at their lives. You say; 'well I don't want to judge anyone'. Well listen, you had better be discerning enough in getting your counselors that you look at peoples lives. That you see if they have lived out a life that serves God. Then there somebody you can listen to. But, if there living a life that is out of the will of God, don't choose them as a counselor. You say; 'preacher why are you saying this?' Because, I see people do it all the time. They listen to people they should not be listening to. If we're going to determine the will of God, then let's listen to wise, spiritual, trustworthy counselors. You know that's why... You know, I've talked about the importance of those that influence you. You know you will be a result of the people you run around with, the books that you read, and the music you listen to. And you need to think about where those things are coming from? What kind of agenda do they have? You know they've been talking a lot about-about some of the movies they've put out recently, and what's behind those movies. And they don't make any bones about why their doing these things. You know, you need to realize that even the shows that come on television that there's usually an agenda attached to that thing. Even what may look like and innocent show; realize that there may be another agenda attached to that. Think about where you're getting your counsel. Think about who it's coming from. And then, let me move on to the last thing...

## **An Inner, abiding PEACE in the HEART**

I believe it's important that we have an inner abiding peace in the heart. Colossians 3:15 the scripture say's; "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts..." Now quickly, understand that the peace of God does not mean an absence of conflict. Many times there's going to be a lot of conflict going around, but the peace of God is a constant in your heart. It's something you can have regardless of the circumstances. It's like the joy that God gives us that's not a matter of happiness of depending on what's happening, but it's a matter of being in touch with what it is that God wants you to do, and knowing that this is the will of God. There is an abiding inner peace. So I want to wrap this up, and I t want to just say, you know doing the will of God is a decision we have to make. When we got saved, and we told God that we needed to be forgiven and we wanted to go to heaven, that was the very first step of showing God that we really trusted him and that God knows what's best. But folks those are the baby steps. That's the very beginning. That's when we got the new birth. There are some steps that need to be taken and there are some decisions that have to be made, and there are a lot of decisions that come down the road. You see we are a result of the choices that we make. And as we make those choices we need to make sure we have based those choices on the will of God in our life. To do the will of God requires faith and action. The scripture say's in Hebrews 11:6 without faith it's impossible to please God. So realize this; that if we're going to do the will of God sometimes there are major adjustments that accompany Gods will. Sometimes there are some major turns that take place. Unexpected turns. But I believe we have to ask ourselves the question; once that God makes his will clear are we willing to do what God say's ? Our we willing to follow the will of God when he does make it clear? We can pray about it. We can read the scriptures. But are we willing to do the will of God, regardless? You see I really believe that if we're going to grow in the Lord and accomplish what God wants us to accomplish, we have to know the will of God. And I would not be a faithful preacher of the Gospel if I didn't tell you that every Christian needs to know how to discern the will of God. Every one of you here that name the name of Christ, you need to know God's will. You say; 'I don't know what God's will is for my life'. The failure to know God's will is always human failure. God has revealed his will in his word, and he will reveal his will if we will just listen to what he has to say, and do what God wants us to do.

## **Closing Comments & Prayer**

I would like for every head to be bowed and every eye closed for just a moment. You know, in preparing this as the Holy Spirit has really impressed my heart about, this particular area. I don't know what it is that someone maybe wrestling with, but I'm convinced that if we're going to do the will of God we need to know how to discern the will of God. I can tell you quite honestly that some of you may have a problem with knowing the will of God simply because you've never trusted Christ. Now, again I'm not trying to make anyone doubt, but that's a foundation in knowing the will of God. And then I want you to know that, if your going to know the will of God as a Christian don't be lead about by every wind of doctrine. Make sure that it's grounded in the word of God. Now, there may be areas that God doesn't just put out plainly on the sign, he may just say; 'drive carefully'. But when God puts a sign out like that, he say's; 'you know, there are some principles that you need to learn to apply, because you need to understand what the will of God is. And so tonight, as you may be trying to determine the will of God... I think about the young people going to camp just within a few days. There are lives that hang in the balance in knowing the will of God. I have seen many that have gone to youth camp, and when they got there, they got away from all the things of home and all the regular routine, and they heard the preaching of the gospel, and God made it clear to them what he wanted them to do. You see I believe that our hearts always ought to have a green light; 'God as soon as you show me your will, I'll do it'. Now I don't know what changes God may have in mind. Sometimes people get the wrong friends. They get people that lead them the wrong direction; they have to change their friends. Sometimes people have to change their jobs. Sometimes people have to change their locations. How could Moses have stayed in the desert and gone and stood before Pharaoh? He couldn't be at two places at once; he had to be willing to go where God wanted him to go. But we need to be able to discern that. He say's; 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not to thy own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths.' God will direct ya, but you've got to trust him.

Father we thank you so much for your word. Lord I thank you for the opportunity to know your will. And God I pray, that we would not allow anything to hinder us from knowing and doing your will in our lives. In Jesus' name I pray... Amen.