

**PROVERBS SERIES SIXTEEN
GOD'S GUIDANCE
Dr. Roger Barrier**

Proverbs 3:5-6;13:16;15:22;18:1;19:2;20:5;27:9

Invitation from last week: 50 decisions. 26 over 18; 24 under 18, all generations.
Another opportunity at the close of this service. Hospitality Room

If God were visible and sitting next to you this morning, and you could ask Him one question, what would you ask?

•**SLIDE #:** Majority probably would ask: "What's your will for my life?"

Mention the phrase, "the will of God", and it seems that regarding God's will, there is tremendous amount of confusion.

•**SLIDE #:** There are some who feel that God's will is lost.

"Well, I'm searching for God's will." I want to say, "Oh, I didn't know that it was lost."

Some feel that God is like a supernatural Easter bunny - runs thru universe hiding His will like Easter eggs and then sits in Heaven as we lead our lives and search for His will and He says, "You're getting warmer."

•**SLIDE #:** Many people are afraid of His will. They don't want to find it.

Look at God as if He's a cosmic kill joy. Whatever is most miserable thing that they can think of - that must be His will.

Now if you read the average insurance policy you might get that idea. Look at section entitled acts of God: "Hurricanes, tornadoes, flood" - as if God is up there to wreck havoc on everyone who is down here.

•**SLIDE #:** Hear some say, "I did that because it was God's will" or "I didn't do that because it wasn't God's will." I conclude that God gets blamed for a lot of stuff that He has nothing to do with.

•**SLIDE #:** ~~A middle aged farmer who had been desiring for years was out working in the field one day when he decided to rest under a tree. As he looked in the field one day he saw that the clouds seemed to form into the letters P and C. Immediately he hopped up, sold his farm, and went out to P reach C hrist, which he felt was God's leading. Unfortunately, he was a horrible preacher. After one of his sermons a neighbor came forward and whispered in his ear, "Are you sure God wasn't just trying to tell you to P lant C orn?"~~

On the other hand, some of you are right on track. Good for you, be patient with some of the rest of us who still struggle.

•**SLIDE #:** In one of Charles Schulz's famous "Peanuts" cartoons, Lucy is philosophizing and Charlie is listening.

"Charlie Brown," she begins, "life is a lot like a deck chair. Some place it to see where they've been. And some so they can see where they are at the present."

Charlie Brown sighs. "I can't even get mine unfolded."

Perhaps that is how you feel. It is not much fun trying to get untracked, is it?

Today we will examine proverbial wisdom concerning God's will. When you leave you will have a better idea of the interactive relationship with God that makes the will of God the most obvious thing in your life.

Our attention will center around Proverb 3:5-6:

•SLIDE #: Proverb 3:5-6: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

These two verses have encouraged believers for centuries in their quest for God's guidance, and for those who have sincerely met the conditions, the promise has never failed.

Explain through the verses.

•SLIDE #: PROVERB 3:5: TRUST IN THE LORD.

•SLIDE #: A father, seeing three small children playing atop a high fence, feared that they would fall; and so he cried, "Come, jump into my arms!" Two of them promptly did so. The third one hesitated. Why did the third child react more slowly? The father explained, "The first two obeyed immediately because they were my own children. They knew me and therefore trusted me." So, too, those who truly know and love the Lord never resist His good leading.

But, what if you don't?
Dad throwing Theresa into swimming pool.
Issue of trust is build on long-term relationship—not a one time experience.

So many things God is blamed for. It is a wicked world. He is here to pour in the power to help us live victoriously through all of it.

Trust is built over time.

Story of dying bird on 18th at Starr Pass. Hot and dehydrated.
What would you do? Would you grip it in your hand and crush it? Or would you give it shelter and care?"

Fed ice, took home. Water dropper, drinks—strengthened—flew away.

Ever felt dehydrated in life. Divorce, cancer, tragedy, loneliness, loss of job.
Where was God? I can't trust Him. This is His fault. Loved me He could have prevented it.
No, it is a wicked world.

He wants to bring you shelter and care.

A little boy walked down the beach, and as he did, he spied a matronly woman sitting under a beach umbrella on the sand. He walked up to her and said, "Are you a Christian?"
"Yes."
"Do you read your Bible every day?"
She nodded her head. "Yes."
"Do you pray often?" the boy asked next, and again she answered, "Yes."
With that he asked his final question. "Will you hold my quarter while I go swimming?"

God, are you a Xn. I am Christ. Do you read the Bible every day? I wrote it. Do you pray often? Every day and for every body.

Will you take my life while I go living?

•SLIDE #: PROVERB 3:5: WITH ALL YOUR HEART

We are talking about commitment.

“There are too many ‘cafeteria Christians’ in our congregation. Instead of letting God pick the whole meal and accepting it, they pick and choose what they want, and they miss the best dishes He fixes for them!”

This commitment is spelled out on Romans 12:1-2, another familiar passage about the will of God.

•SLIDE #: Romans 12:1-2: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Before I can “prove by experience” what God’s will is, and discover that His will is “good, pleasing, and perfect”, I must give Him my body, my mind, and my will, a total commitment of my total being. This is a once-for-all presentation, but it needs to be renewed daily as we meet with the Lord in worship and prayer.

Knowing and doing the will of God isn’t a “spiritual technique” that we use occasionally; it’s a committed lifestyle that involves everything we do.

•SLIDE #: Americans have a national colloquialism which is frequently used when signing documents. This common practice of asking for a person’s “John Hancock” comes from the most obvious signature on our Declaration of Independence. John Hancock’s name is the only signature that can be identified by the casual observer... and that’s exactly what he intended.

As President of the Congress, he felt responsible to make a clear statement to not only the king, but to his fellow countrymen as well. Consequently, he was the first to sign, and as all Americans know, he artistically scrawled his name in large, flowing letters. His expressed intent was to make certain King George III could read his name without the aid of glasses. It was a bold declaration of his personal commitment to the cause for which he was willing to die. John Hancock’s overly legible signature hit the target at which he aimed. During the Revolutionary War, King George offered amnesty to all of the Americans who were willing to stop the war. Hancock and a few others were intentionally omitted from this proposition. His zealous signature informed the king there was no turning back, and the British empire clearly heard that strong message of commitment.

All of us are asked to give our “John Hancock” to the Lord Jesus Christ.

•SLIDE #: PROVERB 3:5: AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING

It is not good to seek God’s will alone.

•SLIDE #: Proverb 15:22: Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

Wise People

•SLIDE #: Proverb 27:9: Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,

and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

A loving and wise friend can often see dangers and detours that are hidden from us.

It's best to be accountable to another believer and submit to the authority of the spiritual leaders in our church.

During more than thirty-five years of ministry, I've witnessed the painful downfalls of several "Lone Ranger" Christians who thought they didn't need anybody's counsel.

•SLIDE #: Proverb 18:1: "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment."

Not every friend is a good counselor, so we must choose wisely.

•SLIDE #: Proverb 20:5: The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.

It takes a counselor with loving patience and a discerning spirit to help us see what lies deep within our hearts.

Find advice in the Word of God.

•SLIDE #: Proverb 13:16: "Every prudent man acts out of knowledge, but a fool exposes his own folly."

•SLIDE #: Proverb 19:2: It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.

As we seek to know God's will, we must gather all the facts we can and assess them, because our decision must be based on knowledge and not hearsay.

Most of the situations, opportunities, and decisions the average person encounters in life are already dealt with in the Word of God.

If we're saturated with God's wisdom and sincerely seeking His will, we'll be ready for Him to guide us by His Spirit and the providential circumstances of life.

•SLIDE #: PROVERB 3:6 IN ALL YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM

The Hebrew word translated "acknowledge" in Proverbs 3:6 carries with it the idea of intimate communion and is used to describe the marriage relationship (Gen 4:1; 19:8).

Relationships are important.

Three men were marooned on an island. Suddenly a genie appeared and said, "What would you like to have? Any wish is yours."

One man said, "I miss my family in L.A." Whoosh – and he was gone. Another said, "I miss my brokerage in Boston. I wish I were back at my desk. I wish I were at work." Whoosh – and he was gone.

Then the third man said, "I'm lonely. I wish my friends were back here."

Since the will of God comes from the heart of God, it ought to draw my heart closer to Him.

Elisabeth Elliot suggests that we often ask God for too little. "We think we know what we need – a yes or no

answer, please, to a simple question. Or perhaps a road sign. Something quick and easy to point the way.

- **SLIDE #:** “What we really ought to have is the Guide Himself. Maps, road signs, a few useful phrases are good things, but infinitely better is Someone who has been there and knows the way.”
- **SLIDE #:** Prior to their wedding, David and Susan met with the minister to discuss their marriage ceremony and various traditions, such as the lighting of the unity candle from two individual candles. Couples usually blow out the two candles as a sign of becoming one. Their minister said that many people were now leaving their individual candles lit to signify independence and personal freedom. He asked if they wanted to extinguish the candles or leave them burning. After thinking about it, David replied, “How about if we leave mine lit and blow hers out?”
- **SLIDE #:** The Alban Institute cites these reasons why people should become active members of a Christian church:

Active church members have a *60% less chance of a heart attack.*

Active church members have a *55 percent less chance of a one-car accident.*

Active church members *live an average of 5.7 years longer.*

While only 30% of the highly unchurched say they are very happy, 70% of the highly committed church people say they are very happy.

The National Institute of Health has now developed *five protective factors that help fight coronary disease. The leading one is weekly church attendance.*

Teen suicide, the number two killer of teens, is substantially less frequent among teens that attend church weekly.

A Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance “Survey of the Values of the American People” reflected that *the single most important variable in health-promoting lifestyles was religious affiliation.*

- **SLIDE #:** PROVERB 3:6: AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT.

- **SLIDE #:** In the early morning hours of August 31, 1997 the princess Diana died in a Paris hospital after a violent car accident. According to her psychic, this accident was not supposed to be part of her future. Just a few weeks before her death, Diana went with Dodi al-Fayed to see a clairvoyant on August 12. They spent almost two hours with Rita Rogers, a psychic in Chesterfield, England.

The couple sought guidance on their future and it appeared they received some great encouragement. One witness said, “Di was grinning all over her face and looked like she had received good news.” Nineteen days later, she was dead.

Only God can truthfully declare, “I know the plans I have for you.”

- **SLIDE #:** Proverb 19:21: “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”

God expects us to use our brains and make plans, but He also expects us to submit those plans to Him, and let Him make the final decision.

- **SLIDE #:** Proverb 16:3: 3 Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

If we’re yielded to the Lord and our plans are not His plans, He will show us what’s right and steer us away from what’s wrong.

So, when we have a decision to make,

•SLIDE #: CHECKLIST (not necessarily linear)

1. Humble Your Heart In Surrendered Relationship With The Lord
2. Gather Pertinent Facts
3. Seek Wise counsel
4. Interact With The Spirit In Analyzing Appropriate Scriptures
5. Commit Your Plans To The Lord

•SLIDE #: 6. Listen And Wait Quietly For God To Speak

- a. Bible verses, promises or warnings
- b. God's people
- c. Providential circumstances
- d. Worship and/or prayer
- e. Trials and/or sufferings
- f. "Fleeces" (Judges 6:17-40) (only if God invites you to lay one out)
- g. Inner promptings of the human spirit

•SLIDE #: 7. Do Whatever Your Heart Leads You To Do

You say, "But Roger, you didn't tell me whether I ought to go to this school. Didn't tell me about new job or new car or who to marry, etc."

If you are doing these 6 things, - you just do whatever you want.

You say, "What do you mean, 'Do whatever you want.'"

This checklist outlines what the Psalmist meant in Psalm 37:4:

•SLIDE #: Psalm 37:4_ "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

Notice He didn't say that he would fulfill our desires, He said He'd put the desires in there.

It's not that He gives you what you want, He gives you the wants. It's not that He fulfills the desires, He gives you the desires themselves.

"You mean, if I do those 6 things and I want a new car then it's God's will for me to buy the new car?" Yes, but just remember, when you're doing these things God may change your priorities and you may not want that car after all.

But let me warn - if you're not doing these things, don't do whatever you want to do because God's not yet leading your life.

When in college, I came across a poem written by a teenage girl looking for a husband. It was written as a prayer, and this is what she said:

•SLIDE #: Dear God, I pray all unafraid/As girls are wont to be
I do not want a handsome man/But make him, Lord, like Thee.
I do not need one big and strong/nor yet so very tall,
Nor need he be some genius/or wealthy, Lord, at all;
But let his head be high, dear God/and let his eye be clear,
His shoulders straight, whate'er his fate/whate'er his earthly sphere.
And let his face have character,/a ruggedness of soul,
And let his whole life show, dear God,/a singleness of goal.
And when he comes/as he will come

With quiet eyes aglow/I'll know, dear Lord,
That he's the man/I prayed for long ago.

•SLIDE #: That girl's name was Ruth Bell, and she later met and married – Billy Graham

•SLIDE #: Baby Birds: Which on will get the worm?