

life group study guide

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How Do I Know God's Will for My Life?

Big Idea: When you follow God's will, it will always lead you to become more like Jesus and bring glory to Him.

When making a decision, the question we must ask is this:

Will this decision make me more like Jesus (for myself and for others to see), and will it bring Him glory or take it away? The moral application is that our decision may make sense to us in our own thoughts and understanding, but God's will says it may not be for the best. Submissiveness has everything to do with seeing where God is leading you and following! Do you trust God's way is best? Nothing more...nothing less...nothing else.

God didn't send His Son to die for us and give us His Word in the flesh so we can weigh it against our own opinion. He sent Him to us to give us life...and the best life worth living!

The emphasis on the inward man is the key point which separates Christianity from all other religions. The control of the inner man is the secret to a righteous life. Free-spirited, spontaneous living is irresponsible and destructive. The book of Proverbs (wisdom!) encourages us to exercise self-control, because disciplined living refines and strengthens character. Proper living is developed and controlled at the source of one's actions – the impulses of his heart (Proverbs 4:23; 23:7). This may be our most difficult challenge, but it will also be our greatest victory!

1. Necessity of Submission and Self-Control

- A. Because the Heart Controls the Man. (Proverbs 4: 23; 23:7; 27:19) The heart IS the man; it is his control center. *"The soul of man is the fountainhead of life, and when it is contaminated...so is life. For when the heart is corrupted, the streams of life are polluted...since all of life stems from this one spring."* (Maurice Meredith, Studies in Proverbs, page 39) See also Matthew 12: 33-35 and Mark 7: 14-23.
- B. Because of Man's Inadequacy. Man cannot deliver himself. The only standard he knows is his own judgment. (Proverbs 12:15; 14:12 and 14; 16:2; 21:2) The standard of right and wrong must be somewhere besides our own hearts. Therefore, we must gain control of ourselves, then submit ourselves to God's will. Man must give his heart to God. (Proverbs 23:26; 3:5-8; 19:21)

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2. Achieving Submission and Self-Control

- A. Through Discipline and Instruction. (Proverbs 10:8; 15:5, 31-32; 23:12) We should receive both without arrogantly scorning them. The wise man PROFITS by advice and discipline he receives.
- B. Through Self-Restraint. (Proverbs 16:32; 25:28) The man who restrains himself is the mightiest man alive! He resists and flees temptation. (Proverbs 4:14-17, 20-27; 23: 1-7, 17; 24:1) He exhibits responsible behavior. (Proverbs 20:5; 23:19) He thinks before acting or reacting, then guides his heart in the right way. He does not engage his mouth before his mind is in gear! (Proverbs 13:3; 15:28; 16:23; 21:23)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does the Bible emphasize the heart of the inner man so much?
2. With so many passionate and conflicting emotions prompting men to action, what is our responsibility to those actions?
3. Does the man under control (submission) think or act first? (Proverbs 20:5; 23:19)
4. Is a disciplined life really as boring as the “free spirits” make it out to be? Why?
5. What is the greatest human display of strength? (Proverbs 16: 32; 25:28)
6. Is the wise man one who never makes mistakes or one who profits from his mistakes?
7. What quality does the wise man possess which enables him to listen and profit from advice and reproof? (Proverbs 15: 31-33)
8. Do those who GIVE the most advice generally HEED the advice of others? Are YOU an advice-giver or an advice-receiver?
9. How can man achieve total submission?
10. In what areas are you not in submission? Where will you find your solutions?

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