



Shelby Christian Church

CORE 52: LIVING IT- KNOWING GOD'S WILL

1CORINTHIANS 2:16, ACTS 17-18, ISAIAH 6:9-10, JOHN 7:17, COLOSSIANS 1:9 * 8/17/2025

INTRODUCTION

Was there ever a time in your life where you felt totally confused as to what God wanted for your life? What did you do?

What are some common practices or principles you've heard for figuring out God's will?

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:16

What question does Paul ask in this verse?

What answer does Paul give about how believers understand God?

What does it mean to “have the mind of Christ”?

How does having the mind of Christ affect the way we understand God’s will?

How does this verse relate to spiritual wisdom and discernment?

What contrasts or connections do you see between “the mind of the Lord” and human understanding?

Paul is addressing the Corinthian church about spiritual wisdom versus worldly wisdom. In the preceding verses, he explains that true understanding comes from the Spirit of God, not human intellect alone. Verse 16 encourages believers to rely on the Holy Spirit to cultivate the mind of Christ, enabling godly wisdom in daily decisions and spiritual growth. It challenges us to seek alignment with Christ’s values—such as humility, love, and obedience—rather than conforming to worldly standards. This verse invites a transformative relationship where our thoughts and attitudes increasingly reflect those of Jesus.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 17-18

What strategies did Paul use to engage both Jewish and Gentile audiences?

How did the Bereans’ response differ from that of the Thessalonians? What can we learn from that?

Why was Paul’s time in Corinth significant for the early church?

How does Paul's example of perseverance encourage believers today?

What role did prayer and Scripture study play in the spread of the gospel in these chapters? In what ways can we respond like the Bereans by examining Scripture to confirm what we hear?

Acts 17–18 narrates a critical phase in Paul's second missionary journey. He travels through key cities in Macedonia and Greece, preaching the gospel in both Jewish synagogues and public places. It shows the spread of the gospel beyond Jerusalem into the Gentile world, emphasizing both the challenges and triumphs of early Christian mission work. It demonstrates how God works through diverse people and places to establish His church. These chapters reveal Paul's perseverance, adaptability, and the varied responses to the gospel.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 6:9-10

Why would God command Isaiah to proclaim a message that seems to harden people's hearts?

How does this passage relate to the idea of judgment and mercy?

What does this say about the people's spiritual condition?

Are there times when we hear God's word but fail to truly understand or apply it? Why?

What might cause our hearts to become "calloused" or dull to God's voice?

How can we guard against spiritual blindness and hardheartedness?

How does this passage challenge us to respond differently to God's word today?

Isaiah 6:9-10 warns of the danger of hardening our hearts against God's word. It challenges us to examine how we hear and respond to Scripture. Are we truly understanding and applying God's truth, or have we become indifferent? This passage encourages humility, openness, and a prayerful heart to perceive and obey God's voice.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 7:17

Why is doing God's will connected to understanding Jesus' teaching?

What does this verse imply about the relationship between obedience and spiritual understanding?

How does this challenge the idea that knowledge alone leads to truth?

In John 7, Jesus is teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles, and there is much debate among the people and religious leaders about His identity and authority. This verse challenges believers to move beyond mere knowledge or curiosity about Jesus and to actively pursue God's will. It assures us that when we choose obedience, God grants clarity and confirms the truth of Jesus' teaching. This verse invites us to evaluate our faith by how closely our lives align with God's purposes and encourages a living, active trust in Jesus.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 1:9

What does it mean to be “filled with the knowledge of God’s will”?

How do spiritual wisdom and understanding differ from human wisdom?

Why is Paul so concerned that the Colossians grow in this kind of knowledge?

How does this kind of prayer reflect Paul’s priorities for spiritual growth?

Colossians 1:9 reminds us that spiritual depth doesn’t come from trying harder, but from being filled by God through His Spirit. This prayer challenges us to pursue a life shaped by God’s will, not just our own desires or plans. It also teaches us how to pray for others—not merely for health or success, but for spiritual clarity and transformation.

APPLICATION

**Can you share a time when you were pretty clear what was directing you to do?
What have been the best resources for you to discern God’s will?**

Do you know of an example where someone couldn’t hear God speak because their own habits or actions were drowning out what God might have been clearly saying to them?

How would you rank your own level of biblical literacy on a scale of 1-10? What would be your best next step to learn to extract life-principles from your Bible reading?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

1 Corinthians 2:16

“For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” - This rhetorical question emphasizes the incomparability and sovereignty of God’s wisdom. No human can fully comprehend God’s thoughts or teach Him anything—God is infinite and perfect.

“But we have the mind of Christ.” - Despite God’s transcendent wisdom, believers are granted access to Christ’s mind through the Holy Spirit. “The mind of Christ” means sharing in Christ’s understanding, values, purposes, and discernment. This reflects a deep spiritual union, enabling believers to grasp God’s will beyond mere human reasoning.

Acts 17-18

Acts 17: Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–9): Paul preaches in the synagogue for three Sabbaths, reasoning from Scripture that Jesus is the Messiah. Some Jews and a large number of God-fearing Greeks believe, but some Jews become jealous and incite a mob, forcing Paul to flee.

Key themes: Bold proclamation of the gospel. Opposition from some Jewish leaders. Mixed responses—belief and unbelief.

Berea (Acts 17:10–15):

The Bereans are commended for their eagerness and noble character, examining the Scriptures daily to verify Paul's message. Many believe. Key themes: Bereans' diligence in Scripture study. Positive reception to the gospel. Paul continues ministry despite challenges.

16–34: Paul in Athens- Paul engages with Greek philosophers at the Areopagus, presenting the gospel in a culturally relevant way by referencing their altar to an unknown god. He proclaims the resurrection, but responses are mixed—some mock, others are curious or believe. This episode shows Paul's adaptability in sharing the gospel in a highly philosophical context.

Acts 18: Corinth - Paul stays in Corinth for about 18 months, teaching and establishing a strong church community. He works as a tentmaker alongside Aquila and Priscilla, who become key partners in ministry. Paul faces opposition but receives encouragement through a vision from the Lord. Crispus, a synagogue leader, and many Corinthians believe and are baptized. Paul's ministry here is marked by perseverance, partnership, and significant church growth.

Isaiah 6:9-10

"Go and tell this people..." - God commands Isaiah to deliver a message of warning and judgment to the people of Judah. This is not a message of comfort but a prophetic pronouncement of their spiritual condition.

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." - The people are described as hearing God's word repeatedly but failing to grasp its meaning or apply it.

"Seeing but never perceiving" suggests a lack of spiritual insight despite exposure to God's works and revelations.

"Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes." - This is a judicial hardening, where God allows their spiritual insensitivity as a consequence of their persistent rebellion. It indicates a spiritual blindness and deafness, preventing them from repenting. This hardening is not God's desire but a form of judgment.

"Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, turn and be healed." - The alternative to hardening would be repentance and healing—if only they would respond rightly. This shows God's heart for restoration despite their stubbornness.

John 7:17

"If anyone chooses to do God's will..." - The emphasis is on personal choice and willingness to align one's life with God's purposes. Obedience is voluntary and intentional, not forced or superficial.

"...he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." - Genuine obedience leads to spiritual insight and discernment about Jesus' authority.

Understanding Jesus' message isn't just intellectual but experiential—rooted in a heart seeking to live according to God's will.

This contrasts with simply hearing or debating His words without true commitment.

Colossians 1:9

“For this reason...” - Refers back to verses 3–8, where Paul praises God for their faith and love. Because of their sincere Christian life, Paul desires their continued growth and maturity.

“Since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you.” - Paul’s prayer is ongoing and persistent, reflecting his deep concern for their spiritual well-being. This also models a Christ-centered approach to intercessory prayer.

“We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will...” - Paul prays for spiritual fullness, not just intellectual knowledge.

“Knowledge of His will” involves understanding God’s purpose and desires, not merely rules or decisions. This is relational knowledge—knowing God and aligning one’s life with Him.

“...through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives.” - This is not worldly wisdom, but Spirit-empowered discernment. “Wisdom” (Greek: *sophia*) refers to insight into the nature of things, especially moral and spiritual truth. “Understanding” (Greek: *synesis*) is the ability to apply that wisdom in practical ways. The Holy Spirit is the source of both—true knowledge of God cannot be attained apart from Him.