

DISCERNING GOD'S WILL
Part II: Looking Second To Reputable Counselors
(Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6; 2 Timothy 3:14)

I. Introduction

- A. Believers often wonder and ask how they can know for sure God's will on a given matter. After all, Romans 8:14 informs us that all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God, so if a believer is uncertain about God's leading in his life, he can begin to wonder what is missing in his relationship with the Lord.
- B. Scripture is our ultimate authority for faith and practice, so we view a four-part series of lessons from Scripture on discerning the will of God for our insight, application and edification:

II. Looking Second To Reputable Counselors, Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6; 2 Timothy 3:14.

- A. To discern God's will, our *second* resource *after written Scripture* is *reputable counselors*, and we explain:
 - 1. Though 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 teaches that Scripture is *all* a believer *needs* to be thoroughly equipped to do every good work until he answers to Christ for his life at the Lord's return, in *practice, not every believer* either *knows enough Scripture* or is *spiritually mature enough* to *apply it correctly* in *certain situations*, so he needs reputable counselors to *discern* God's will in *those* cases, Ephesians 4:11-15; 2 Timothy 3:14.
 - 2. For this reason, the Old Testament at Proverbs 11:14, 15:22 and 24:6 and the New Testament at Ephesians 4:11-15 and 2 Timothy 3:14 direct believers to use *multiple, reputable counselors* to discern God's will.
- B. For a practical illustration of this truth, we view the life of Timothy, the Apostle Paul's coworker (as follows):
 - 1. Paul and reputable local church elders recognized God's call of Timothy to the ministry, so they laid hands on him to ordain him, 1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14. By them, Timothy thus gained more assurance of his calling.
 - 2. In 2 Timothy 3:10-12, Paul directed Timothy to recall Paul's sufferings and persecutions in his ministry as a template for how Timothy himself was to handle similar hardships in his own ministry.
 - 3. In 2 Timothy 1:13-14, Paul told Timothy to rely on the Holy Spirit to remain upright in his beliefs.
 - 4. In 1 Timothy 4:12-16, Paul presented the framework for Timothy's pastoral ministry as follows:
 - a. First, Timothy was to be an example in speech, conduct, love, faith and moral purity, 1 Timothy 4:12 ESV.
 - b. Second, Timothy was to devote himself to the functions of the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching, 1 Timothy 4:13 NIV. These functions comprise the basic actions of a pastoral ministry.
 - c. Third, Timothy was to highlight the use of his spiritual gift from the Lord (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 ESV) as testified by a prophetic message at his ordination, 1 Timothy 4:14 (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 741).
 - d. Fourth, Timothy was to be fully preoccupied with these practices so that his own spiritual growth might become evident to the congregation, what would win their confidence in his ministry, 1 Timothy 4:14-16.
- C. For another practical illustration, we refer to the challenge of understanding Revelation 22:19 (as follows):
 - 1. In our last lesson in this series, we learned that the way Revelation 22:19 in the KJV reads, one will lose his salvation if he takes any words away from the book of Revelation, thus rejecting its message.
 - 2. However, the Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Rev. 22:19 and James R. White's book, The King James Only Controversy, 1995, p. 58, 66 testify that the KJV needs to be corrected at that verse to read that God is warning unsaved people of failure to gain eternal life if they reject the gospel of the Revelation.
 - 3. The testimony of these works is certainly academically valid as verified by a number of evangelical scholars and leaders: Dr. Charles Ryrie earned his Ph. D. at the University of Edinburgh, his Th. D. at Dallas Theological Seminary and was a professor of systematic theology at that seminary. James White was a professor at Grand Canyon University, and several evangelical leaders and scholars endorsed his book cited above, among whom were Dr. John Mac Arthur, Dr. J. I. Packer, Dr. Bruce Metzger who earned his Ph. D. at Princeton Theological Seminary and Dr. Gleason L. Archer, Jr., who earned his Ph. D. at Harvard Graduate School, his B. D. at Princeton Theological Seminary and was professor of Old Testament and Chairman of the Division at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Thus, the critique of Revelation 22:19 KJV by Dr. Ryrie's study Bible and Mr. White's book cited above is academically valid.

Lesson: *If a believer lacks spiritual maturity and/or an adequate knowledge of Scripture, his second authoritative resource for discerning God's will after Scripture is multiple, reputable counselors. However, in such a case, a believer must be careful to rely on multiple counselors who have long, proven track records (2 Timothy 3:10-14).*

Application: *If we fail to discern God's will from Scripture due to our lack of discernment, spiritual maturity or knowledge of Scripture, may we heed multiple, reputable counselors with long, proven track records for God's will.*