

**DISCERNING GOD'S WILL**  
**Part III: Looking Third To Circumstantial Guidance**  
**(Acts 16:6-10 et al.)**

**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 Third To Circumstantial Guidance, Acts 16:6-10 et al.**

- A. To know God's will, *after Scripture* and *reputable counselors*, our *third* resource is *circumstantial guidance*:
  - 1. We before learned that though Scripture is sufficient to equip the believer for every good work, and thus to know God's will in his life (2 Timothy 3:15-17), due to spiritual immaturity or ignorance of Scripture, some believers need reputable counselors to discern God's will, cf. Ephesians 4:11-15; 2 Timothy 3:14.
  - 2. However, reputable counselors may not be available, so then one needs God's *circumstantial guidance*.
- B. God provided *circumstantial guidance* for Paul in his missionary journey in Acts 16:6-10 et al.:
  - 1. On Paul's second missionary journey, the Holy Spirit prevented him and his coworkers from ministering in Asia and Bithynia, so they went down to Troas on the eastern coast of the Aegean Sea, Acts 16:6-8.
  - 2. At Troas, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia asking him to come over to help them, Acts 16:9.
  - 3. Paul and his team thus went into Macedonia, believing God had called them to minister there, Acts 16:10.
  - 4. This was an unusual means of divine guidance for Paul: until then, Christ had directly spoken to him (Acts 9:3-6; Galatians 2:1-2), but **here** God led him by *circumstantial guidance*, closing doors to other realms but giving him a vision of a man in Macedonia who was asking the Paul come to Macedonia to help them!
  - 5. If we note the direction God had guided Paul after his commissioning to be a missionary in Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:1-3) on into his first missionary journey, we see God had led him in a west by northwestern direction as far as Antioch in Pisidia (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978: Map 13, "The Missionary Journeys of Paul"). Macedonia lay in the same west by northwestern direction further out from Antioch of Syria, so the vision for Paul to go to Macedonia fit the precedent of God's guidance to that point in his ministry!
- C. For another practical illustration, we refer to the challenge of the Revelation 22:19 reading (as follows):
  - 1. In our first lesson in this series, we learned that 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 claimed that the Revelation 22:19 KJV reading that believers would lose their salvation if they rejected the words of Revelation should be corrected to read that God warned the unsaved of failure to be saved if they rejected the book's words.
  - 2. In our second lesson, we found the claim by these men was credibly academically backed by evangelicals.
  - 3. However, Dr. Ryrie, James White and **each** of these **other** men are **Moderate** or **Strict Calvinists**, so one might conclude that they were **biased** in **support of the reading that favors Calvinistic eternal security!**
  - 4. Thus, for direction, we view *circumstantial* evidence associated with these men and the two readings:
    - a. First, the *training* each man received **differs** significantly from each other: Dr. Ryrie received his Ph. D. from Edinburgh and his Th. D. from Dallas Seminary; J. I. Packer received his Ph. D. from Oxford; Dr. Metzger received his Ph. D. from Princeton; Dr. Gleason Archer received doctorates from Princeton and Harvard and James White received his Ph. D. from an unaccredited institution, but he relied on these other highly educated men to read and give their support for the accuracy and credibility of his book.
    - b. Second, there is **unanimous support** from the **textual apparatuses** of the United Bible Societies Greek N. T., 1966 [American, British and Foreign, Scotland, Netherlands, and Wurttemberg Bible Societies] and the Nestle Greek New Testament that **all** of the **Greek manuscripts** read as Dr. Ryrie and James White claim.
    - c. Thus, the *circumstantial* evidence of (i) the **high degree** of **diversity** in the *training* of these men coupled with (ii) their **unanimous consent** to the reading and (iii) the **unanimous manuscript testimony** by the multiple Bible Societies' textual apparatuses highly support the reading given by Dr. Ryrie and Mr. White.

**Lesson:** *If first Scripture and second reputable counselors are in some way unavailable, we should third seek God's circumstantial guidance to understand His will and the truth on a matter in question.*

**Application:** *If Scripture and reputable counselors are unavailable, may we seek God's circumstantial guidance.*