

DISCERNING GOD'S WILL
Part IV: Looking Fourth To God's Work On Our Will
(Philippians 2:13)

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 Fourth To God's Work On Our Will, Philippians 2:13.

- A. To know God's will, *after Scripture first, reputable counselors second and circumstantial guidance third*, our *fourth* resource is **God's work on our will**. We explain this priority of resources (as follows):
 - 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, when counselors are not available, one needs God's circumstantial guidance, Acts 16:6-10.
 - 3. Nevertheless, in certain situations such as emergencies, Scripture knowledge, reputable counselors and circumstantial guidance may not be available, so we need to rely on **God's work on our will**, Phil. 2:13.
- B. To illustrate this from Scripture, we note how God guided the Apostle Paul in his *will* several times in his life:
 - 1. When Paul came to Athens and was left alone there, his spirit was so stirred within him when he saw the city was full of idols that he began to evangelize there, Acts 17:14-17.
 - 2. In 2 Corinthians 2:12-13, Paul wrote that when he came to Troas and the Lord had opened a door of opportunity for him to minister there, Paul was so troubled in not finding Titus that he left for Macedonia. God thus let Paul leave a door of opportunity to minister that God Himself had opened for Paul!
 - 3. In Acts 21:11-12 when the prophet Agabus predicted that Paul would be bound and delivered over to the Gentiles if he went to Jerusalem, and believers around Paul then urged him not to go to Jerusalem, Paul resisted their pleas, determined to go and die if necessary to witness to his countrymen, Acts 21:13. As a result, the believers said, "The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:14), believing that God was allowing Paul to feel so strongly about his need to go to Jerusalem.
- C. For another illustration related to us, 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 the Revelation 22:19 KJV reading that believers would lose their salvation by rejecting the words of Revelation should be corrected to read that God warned the unsaved of failure to be saved if they rejected that book's message.
 - 2. In our second lesson, we found the claim of these men was backed by academically qualified evangelicals.
 - 3. However, Dr. Ryrie, James White and each of these other men are either Moderate or Strict Calvinists, so one might conclude that they were biased in favoring the pro-Calvinist reading that backs eternal security! Thus, we viewed circumstantial evidence associated with these men and the two readings for direction.
 - 4. However, someone in our Sunday School class who has no verifiable access to the evidence we gave in our last lesson since it involves information about scholars or apparatuses in Greek texts about Greek manuscripts that the member of our class cannot check, so he may question the reading that they upheld!
 - 5. Thus, that class member can rely on the Holy Spirit for **God's work on his will** for guidance (as follows):
 - a. First, he can rely on the advised KJV, NIV and ESV versions to verify the readings of each passage below.
 - b. Second, he can read in John 3:16 that God so loved him that God sent His only Son to die to save him.
 - c. Third, he can read in Psalm 139:1-6 that God knows everything he will do in his future, including any sins.
 - d. Fourth, he can read in Ephesians 3:20 that God is able to do far above all that he can ask or think.
 - e. Accordingly, the class member can then realize that **since** God so loved him that He gave His only unique Son to die to save him, and **since** God is so powerful and so knowing, the **Holy Spirit assures this class member that God MUST have made SURE that he could NOT POSSIBLY LOSE his SALVATION!**

Lesson: *After Scripture, counselors and circumstances, may we rely on God's work on our will to know His will!*

Application: *After Scripture, counselors and circumstances, may we rely on God's work on our will to lead us.*